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Meilhac. - Frou Frou. 1883.

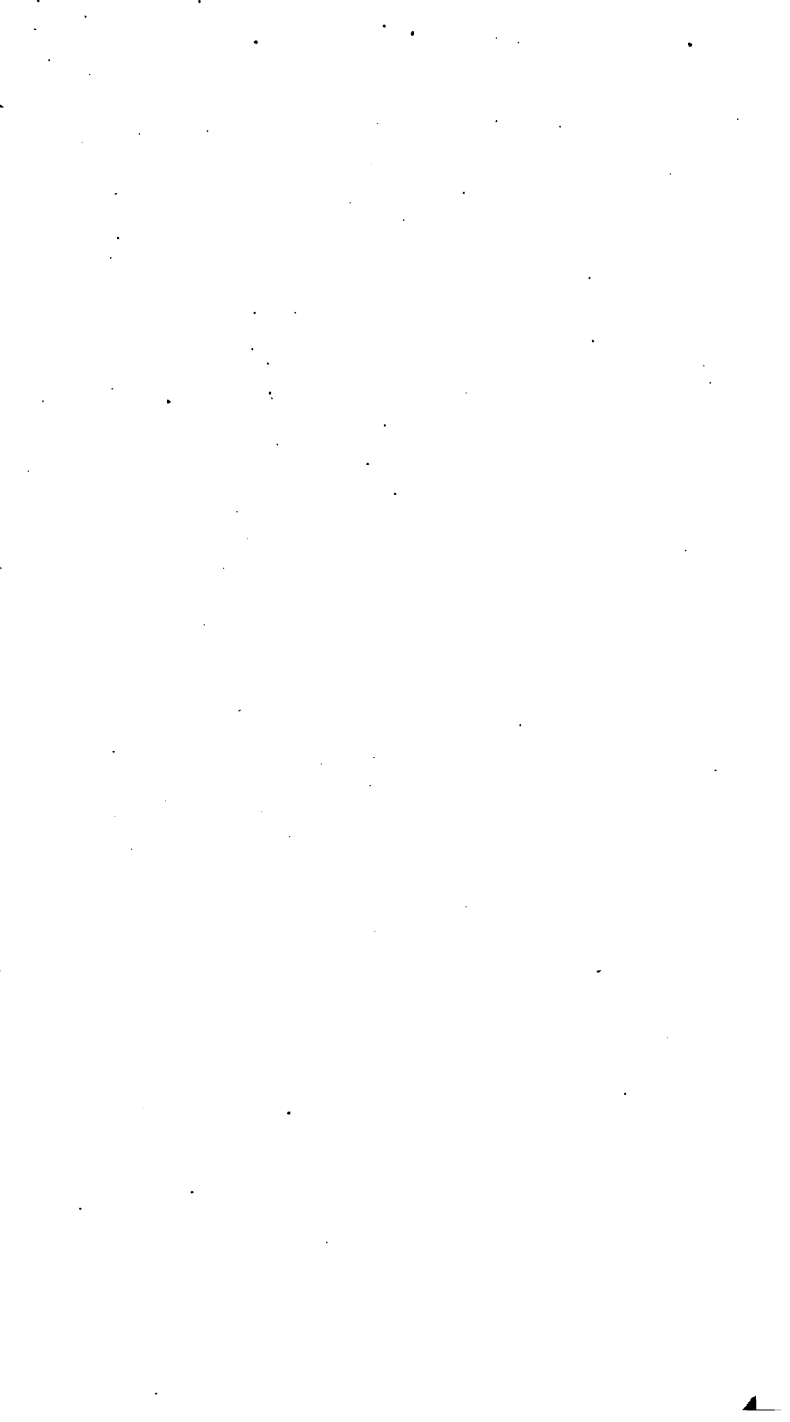
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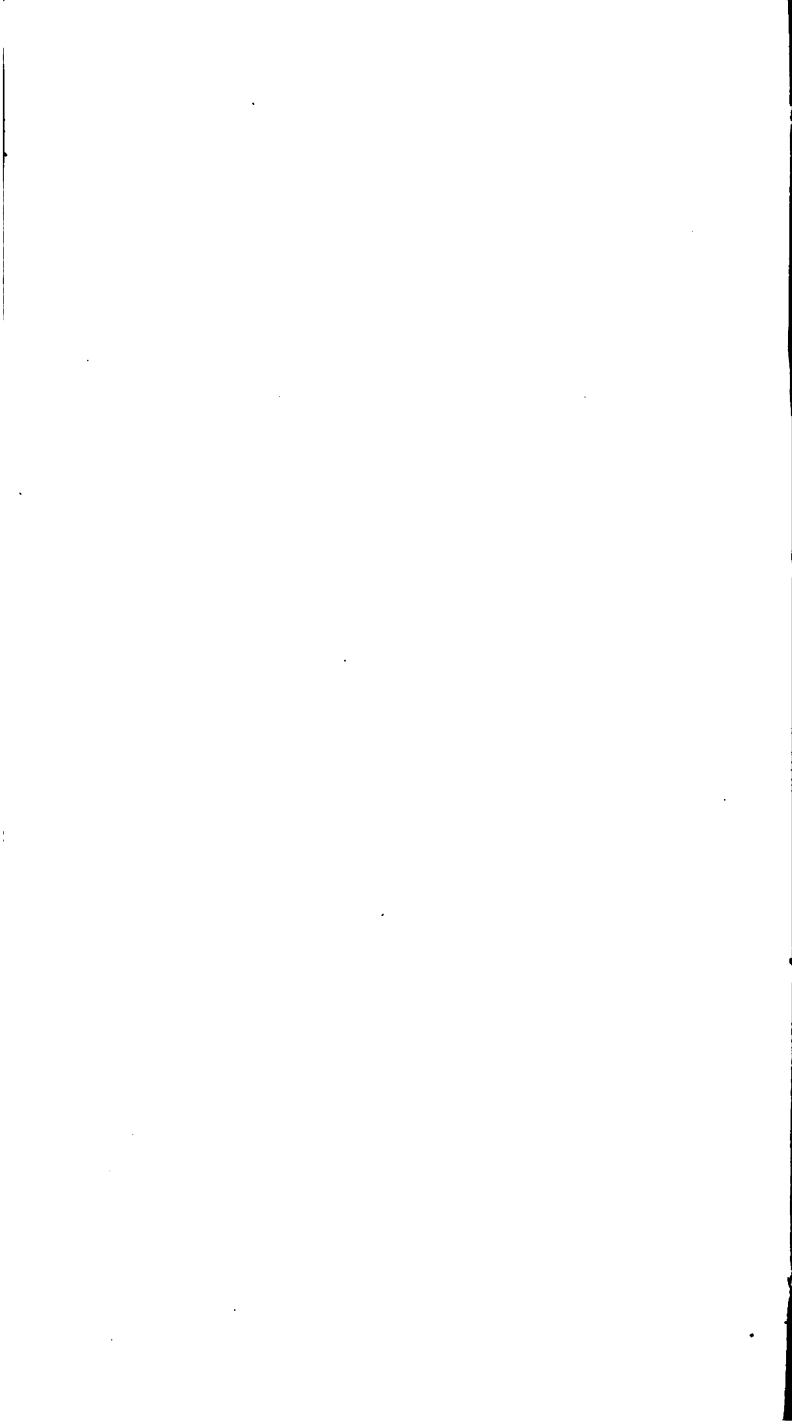
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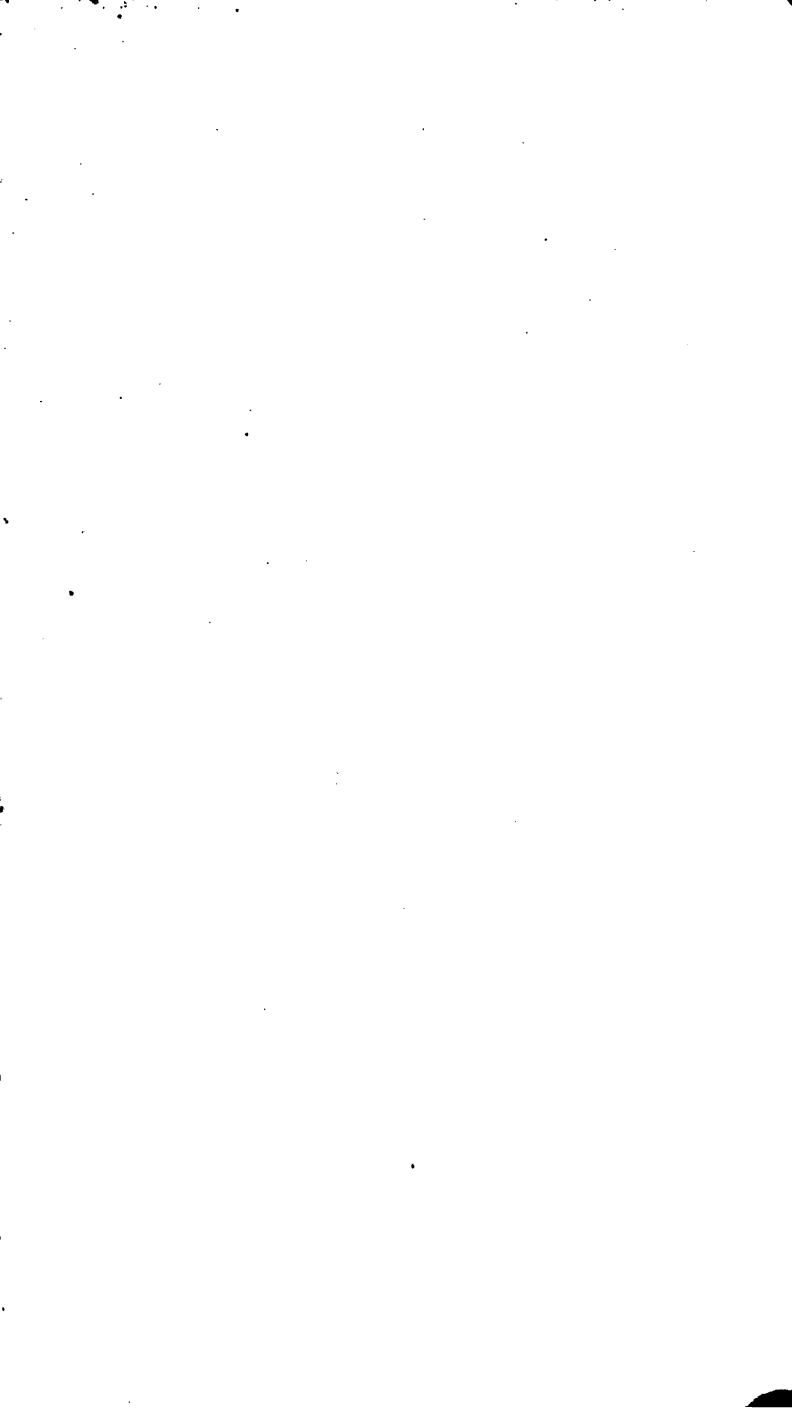
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Helen Modjeska

NO. FROM

... FIVE ACTS.

... AND ...

... BY ...

... HELLAS ...

... IN ...

... WAS ...
...
...



Helen Mojiska

ROYAL PROUD

A PLAY IN FIVE ACTS

BY JAC AND J. W. W.

AS PERFORMED BY

HELENA M. BOZEMAN

COUNTLESS BOZEMAN

HELENA M. BOZEMAN
HAS REMAINED IN THE THEATRE
SIXTEEN AND FORTY-FIVE
1871



Alma J. [unclear]

6

FROU FROU:

A PLAY IN FIVE ACTS,

—BY—

MEILHAC AND HALEVY,

AS PERFORMED BY

MADAME HELENA MODJESKA,
(COUNTESS BOZENTA.)

INDIANAPOLIS:
HASSELMAN-JOURNAL CO., STERROTYPERS,
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1883.

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CAST OF CHARACTERS.

| | |
|--|----------|
| GILBERTE, <i>Frou Frou</i> | MODJESKA |
| BRIGARD..... | |
| HENRI DE SARTORYS..... | |
| PAUL DE VALREAS..... | |
| BARON DE CAMBRI..... | |
| GEORGE DE SARTORYS, <i>A Child</i> | |
| PITOU, <i>A Prompter</i> | |
| LOUISE..... | |
| BARONNE DE CAMBRI..... | |
| PAULINE, <i>A Maid</i> | |
| THE GOVERNESS..... | |

ACT I.—*Les Charmarettes—M. Brigard's Country House.*

ACT II.—*Madame Sartorys' House in Paris.*

ACT III.—*The same.*

ACT IV.—*A Lodging in Venice.*

ACT V.—*Same as Second and Third.*



FROU FROU.

ACT I.

SCENE FIRST.—*Drawing-room at Les Charmarettes. French window opening on a terrace. Table between the windows. Doors R. 2 E. and L. 2 E. Sofa L. Table R. Arm chair, etc.*

PAULINE *discovered dusting.*

PAU. Well, whom have we here? Mdle. Gilberte and M. de Valreas, to be sure! What are they up to, I wonder, urging their horses on like that? My young lady has got in first, anyhow. Here she comes! Yes, yes, its no use for him to spur on his poor mare now, she has won the race.

[*Enter Gilberte, c., in riding habit, out of breath; afterwards Valreas.*]

GIL. I'm first! I'm first! (*Takes the newspaper from table and waves it.*) Here's the newspaper.

VAL. (*Entering.*) Yes, you've got it, and I'm beaten.

GIL. (*Throwing herself in chair.*) Presently, Pauline, presently I will dress.

[*Exit Pauline, R. D.*]

VAL. (R.) I'm beaten; I acknowledge it!

GIL. (L. C.) You say that with a sort of magnanimous air. Did I not win fairly?

VAL. Yes, yes, quite fairly. I only mean that I do not mind having lost.

GIL. Why not?

VAL. Because it is so much pleasanter to ride behind you than in front of you. You sit a horse in the prettiest conceivable fashion, and to see you galloping on like the wind, and—

GIL. Charming! Charming!

VAL. (*Sits in chair, L. C.*) No, no, it is you who are charming—and something more than charming. Do you know that when you took that fence just now your skirt fluttered up just a little, and I saw the prettiest little tiny, tiny foot—

GIL. What!

VAL. I say that you have a very small foot. Look! am I not right?

GIL. (*Hastily withdrawing her foot.*) Oh!

VAL. Will you dare to tell me that it is not the prettiest little foot that was ever seen? Ah, you cannot deny it, Mdlle. Frou Frou! [*Rises.*]

GIL. Come, now, I won't have you call me Frou Frou.

VAL. Is it not your name?

GIL. My name for papa, for my sister Louise, but not for you.

VAL. (C.) Oh, I beg your pardon, for me, too. What other name could so well fit the delightful lady for whom it has been invented. Are you not Frou Frou all over? An opening door in the distance, and then all down the staircase a tripping sound of fairy feet and a sweeping of silken skirts, rustling like a summer whirlwind—Frou Frou. You burst into the room, skip around, turn everything upside down looking for things you don't want; pose and pout, and laugh and dance and chatter and rustle to flutter out again in just such a hurry as you fluttered in—Frou Frou. Frou Frou, (*goes to her*) and do you know I even like to fancy that when you are asleep your own little fairy spirit rustles her gossamer wings above your head with just the same pretty murmur—Frou Frou!

GIL. That's enough—be sensible—do.

VAL. Sensible! You have chosen an odd moment to enjoin that on me. Here was I just going to say such an astonishingly, sensible and prodigiously serious thing to you, that upon my word, I don't know how to begin!

GIL. What! as serious as all that?

VAL. You shall see if it is not. [*Approaches.*]

GIL. (*Jumping up.*) Another time! another time! For however serious a thing you may have to say to me, I have something far more serious to do. I must dress for dinner! [*Cross and up c.*]

VAL. (L. C.) Frou Frou, I wonder if you have any heart!

GIL. There's papa! there's papa!

Enter BRIGARD and MME. DE CAMBRI, C.

BRIG. (L. C.) Gilberte, what is the meaning of this? How came you to ride off alone in front like that, and leave us behind? Not that I regret *that* of course, but—

MME. DE C. (R.) I was wondering whether you would have the grace to say so!

GIL. (R. C.) I will tell you how it was, papa: M. de Valreas and I made a bet as to which of us would reach this room first and take the newspaper off the table, and you see I have done it!

BRIG. (*Taking the newspaper from her.*) And a nice mess you have made it in!

GIL. Well, you never read it—come!

BRIG. And how many times have I forbidden you to leap that ditch?

GIL. There, there, don't scold! It does not agree with you! Besides it was foolish; I am well punished. (*Takes his arm*) Come, I must tell you, I am not at all pleased with M. de Valreas; he said dreadful things to me just now!

VAL. Indeed, M. Brigard, I said nothing—nothing at all.

GIL. Papa shall be the judge of that. A well-brought up girl tells everything to her father. Come papa—he told me that I had no heart, and he called me Frou Frou. [*Exit Gilberte and Brigard, L. D.*]

VAL. (*At L. D., calling after them.*) Mdlle. led me on; indeed, she led me on!

MME. DE C. (*Sitting R.*) Oh, M. de Valreas! M. de Valreas!

VAL. (C.) Well, what have I done now?

MME. DE C. It is nearly four years now since I first knew you, but if anyone were to ask me what you are—

VAL. What I am?

MME. DE C. Yes.

VAL. I am a poor devil who is dying for love of you—that's what I am.

MME. DE C. Dying for four years?

VAL. Certainly: for four years.

MME. DE C. All the same, you have now been in this house two days, and during those two days, you have done nothing but pay attention to Mdlle. Gilbrete.

VAL. That was a stratagem, my dear Baroness. Don't tell anyone, but it was a stratagem.

MME. DE C. To make me jealous?

VAL. Yes; for then perhaps you will learn at last, to believe in my regard for you; and none of this would have happened, mind, if you had received my last declaration with—with kindness; but instead of that you have kept me hanging on—

MME. DE C. (*Interrupting.*) Hush, hush, remember to whom you are speaking. You are not in the green room of the opera.

VAL. That wretched old Brigard has been telling tales about me, I do believe! [*Goes L.*]

MME. DE C. Ah, there are tales to tell, then!

VAL. No, no, on the contrary; but is there really no hope that I shall ever convince you of my deep—of my sincere ad—

MME. DE C. (*Laughing.*) Oh, certainly not.

VAL. (*Joyfully.*) Why, then you see how wise I was to turn for consolation to the little Brigard, besides some time or other things must end there.

MME. DE C. End where? I don't understand.

VAL. (*Sits L.*) No true happiness without the real thing—that's what I preach now; and the real thing is neither this nor that—it is marriage.

MME. DE C. What did you say?

VAL. I said the real thing is marriage.

MME. DE C. You want to marry, and to marry Frou Frou?

VAL. Certainly! What a dear little countess she will make! And what a pretty little wedding it will be.

MME. DE C. Offenbach must write the wedding march.

VAL. (*Rises and goes up C.*) Why not? Besides, there are—what shall I call them?—topographical reasons for the match. Down there to the right, what do you see? The country seat of my friend Sartorys.

To the left, Charmarettes, a property which was for sale two years ago, and was bought by M. Brigard. (*Comes down c.*) Does it not strike you Baroness that when a father comes with two marriageable daughters, and takes up his position between two eligible young men, that— (*Baroness Smiles.*) Ah! it has struck you. You see as I do, that fate has had a finger in the pie, and neither I or Sartorys mean to cross her arrangements. What fun it would be if our weddings were to take place on the same day. First, match Mdle. Louise Brigard with M. Henri de Sartorys; charming union of intellect and wisdom. Second, match Mdle. Gilberte and your humble servant; charming union of just the reverse.

[*Sits, L.*

MME. DE C. I begin to understand; but what makes you think that M. de Sartorys wants to marry Louise?

VAL. Surely, that's as plain as a pikestaff.

MME DE C. Is it?

VAL. Why else should he have spent four long months at Sartorys this year, when he generally stays a fortnight only? And why, if he does not love Louise, does he come here every day?

MME. DE C. (*Rising.*) You really *are* in love?

VAL. What do you mean?

MME. DE C. Nothing.

Enter the BARON, L. C. He carries a botanist's tin box strung round him.

BARON. (L. C.) Here I am!

VAL. (C.) How are you, dear Baron! What have you got there?

BARON. A few rare specimens of some plants. (*Crosses to Madame.*) Here is a flower I plucked on purpose for you, dearest.

MME. DE C. Thank you, but what did I tell you?

BARON. What did you tell me?

MME. DE C. Didn't I absolutely forbid you to appear in my presence with that abominable tin box.

BARON. You did, dearest: so you did. Forbid me in the most formal fashion. I recollect: I will go and leave it in the hall.

[*Exit L. D. 3 E.*

VAL. (*Goes to Baroness.*) Come, Baroness, quick! you were going to tell me something just now.

MME. DE C. What was it?

VAL. When I spoke of a probable match between Mdlle. Louise Brigard and Sartorys.

MME. DE C. I was only going to say that no doubt Louise does appreciate the noble qualities of M. de Sartorys.

VAL. Then isn't it apparent that—

MME. DE C. Its very apparent that he is in love, but none the less that you are. [*Curtseys and exit, R. I E.*]

VAL. Of course I am in love.

Re-enter BARON, C.

BARON. (L. C.) You see, dearest, that it is only for you to express a wish. (*Sees that the Baroness is gone.*) How now!

VAL. She is gone.

BARON. She is gone! I am not surprised; that is the Baroness all over. You come in: "Leave my presence!" she exclaims; "do not return till you have fulfilled such and such conditions, which I impose." You go; suffer; return. She is no longer there. That is my wife.

VAL. Ah!

BARON. You know it well enough.

VAL. I?

BARON. Yes, you!—and many besides you. Oh, do not suppose that I am not acquainted with all the poor wretches who have paid their court to the Baroness! I have watched them all.

VAL. With interest?

BARON. And with compassion! If I were to tell you—but it would take too long—let us only speak of yourself.

VAL. Of me? *I never—no, never!* [*Crosses to L.*]

BARON. Three times! You tried three times! Yes, you made three attempts! The first was of course the day after I had introduced you; the second two years afterwards, at the Blois races. You no doubt hoped much from your amber satin jockey-jacket? Ah, my friend, that might have answered with another woman, but not

with the Baroness. The third attempt you made here, two days ago. And it was because these last overtures were as unsuccessful as the former two that you began to adore Mdlle. Gilberte.

VAL. (*Sits L.*) You must be gifted with second sight.

BARON. You did well to abandon the quest, my dear fellow! I don't believe we shall ever succeed with my wife—not any of us. I have made up my mind to that long ago. Her disposition has its good sides. It grieves me as regards myself, but it reassures me as regards others.

VAL. (*Rises.*) I perfectly understand that.

Enter FOOTMAN, L. 3 E., with three post letters on salver.

FOOTMAN. The post, sir!

BARON. (*Surprised.*) For me? (*Takes them.*) (*Exit Footman L. 3 E.*) The Baroness—the Baroness—the Baroness! (*Laughing.*) Poor devils! I will take them to her, but I know it will be useless.

[*Exit Baron, R. 1 E.*]

Enter BRIGARD, L. 3 E.

BRIG. (R. C.) Ah! You are still there. I am glad of it. I must have an explanation with you.

VAL. (L. C.) Well, I was just thinking that I wanted one with you.

BRIG. What have you been saying to Gilberte?

VAL. Nothing that a young girl might not hear.

BRIG. You think so, do you?

VAL. Certainly! And if what I said to her was a little warm, what does it matter, since I mean to make reparation.

BRIG. In what way may I ask?

VAL. I mean, since I intend to marry her!

BRIG. Marry her! You!

VAL. Me! Why not?

BRIG. Upon my word you understand a joke.

VAL. I assure you I was never more in earnest in my life.

BRIG. In earnest, are you? Well so am I, then. (*Sitting R. C.*) Now, did you seriously suppose that I

should be likely to give Gilberte to you? Come reflect—
arn't you my friend?

VAL. (*Sits L. C.*) (*Sadly.*) I am!

BRIG. Havn't we been about town together for a
whole year?

VAL. We have.

BRIG. Didn't our acquaintance begin at the opera
and ripen into friendship at a supper party? Though
to be sure I did cut you out famously that night we
supped at the Café Riche! She never spoke to you
again after I had come in.

VAL. Cut me out! I like that.

BRIG. Do you mean to say I did not?

VAL. (*Rise.*) Certainly not. (*Pulling himself up.*)
(*Aside.*) I suppose I must humor the old sinner.
(*Aloud.*) Have it as you will. Of course I'm not
going to be such a fool as to contradict you just when I
want something of you.

BRIG. Well, I cut you out then, and I am down-
right fond of you! Really, awfully fond of you, Paul;
but as to giving you my daughter, I wouldn't do it for
worlds.

VAL. You are wrong. I am not a very steady fel-
low, but I should make her happy, I know. And she
would be a countess.

BRIG. Oh, as to that, of course you know I could
have a duke for her if I liked?

VAL. That is vulgar of you. A man should not be
proud of his riches.

BRIG. Oh! why not? You aristocrats are proud of
your old families. Her fortune apart, Gilberte is pretty
enough for anything.

VAL. Well, you are right there. She is devlish
pretty, and with a certain something—

BRIG. I know what you mean; it is in the family.
She could have whom she liked, but I don't care to
look higher than a count.

VAL. Take me, then—do! I declare you don't act
as if you were so very fond of me.

BRIG. But I tell you it is just because I *am* so fond
of you—or, rather, because of the reasons which make
me so fond of you that I will not have you as a son-in-

law. And I wonder you *dare* talk of marriage when you know—and you *know* that I know—with whom you are going to sup to-night.

VAL. What do you mean?

BRIG. Do not try to deceive *me*.

VAL. What do you know, then?

BRIG. Of course I know! Somebody has been to supper at your place every night for the last four days.

VAL. Well, I've been here for two days; surely that is a proof that I mean to break with my old life.

BRIG. Forty-eight hours remain unaccounted for.

VAL. That is true. (*After a pause.*) Your objection is reasonable; when you speak sensibly, I am quite ready to listen.

BRIG. I am glad to hear it.

VAL. And as a further proof of my virtuous intentions, I am going to make a confession to you. I have a supper party at home to-night, but I don't want to go; I don't want ever to see any of that lot again. But how to excuse myself;—there's the difficulty. Now, if only some kind and experienced friend—

BRIG. A friend?

VAL. Yes, a friend who understood such matters and knew the right kind of thing to say—

[*They look at each other and then break into laughter.*]

BRIG. Well, if you insist.

VAL. Would you really go?

BRIG. To please you.

VAL. That is capital.

BRIG. But for the sake of peace, don't speak of it to the little brunette.

VAL. (*With mock dignity.*) Understand, sir, that from henceforth I have no such acquaintances!

BRIG. To be sure; I forgot.

VAL. When will you go?

BRIG. At once.

[*Goes up.*]

VAL. That's right. And when you come back I will again urge my suit.

BRIG. What suit?

VAL. Good heavens!—My suit!

BRIG. He returns to the charge.

Enter LOUISE, c.

BRIG. (*Cross, c.*) But here comes Louise in the nick of time. You had better tell her of your admirable project.

LOU. (R.) What project?

BRIG. Come; speak up!

VAL. It's all very well for you to try and frighten me.

BRIG. Ah, all tremble in her presence. Louise is the only wise one in the house.

LOU. Well, what is it?

VAL. Nothing, except that I have been asking your father's consent to propose to Mdlle. Gilberte.

LOU. (*Trying not to laugh.*) You?

VAL. Yes, I. What do you think?

LOU. I think that you were late for dinner yesterday, and the day before, and that if you don't take care you will be late again to-day.

BRIG. There—you see?

VAL. Of course, everybody is against me.

LOU. Go and dress! go and dress! [*Crosses to L.*]

BRIG. (*To Valreas.*) Am I still to execute your commission?

VAL. (*Haughtily.*) Certainly, sir.

[*Exit Brigard, L. 3 E.*]

LOU. (R.) Are you not gone yet?

VAL. I shall not go till you have told me every one of your reasons for objecting to a match between your sister and myself.

LOU. If I am to do that, we must make up our minds to wait dinner for you.

Enter FOOTMAN, c.

FOOTMAN. M. de Sartorys.

[*Exit, c.*]

Enter M. DE SARTORYS, c.

LOU. (R.) Have you seen papa?

SAR. (C.) Yes, I met him in the garden. How are you, Paul?

VAL. (L.) Quite well, thanks, though indeed my dear fellow you have no idea how I am treated in this house; and—

LOU. You will not be ready!

VAL. I am going, Mademoiselle, I am going.

[Exit L. 3 E.]

LOU. (*Sitting, R.*) How late you are to-day!

SAR. Perhaps because I left home earlier than usual.

LOU. You speak in riddles.

SAR. I will explain. I rode off at full gallop, so eager was I to reach this house; but when I came in sight of the gates, I turned my horse's head and walked him up and down for nearly an hour. Three times I rode up to the entrance, and every time my heart failed me. But at last I took a desperate resolve, and putting spurs to my horse, took the place by assault; and here I am—a little late it is true—but still arrived at last.

LOU. What reason can you have had for so much hesitation.

SAR. I found I had left something at home—

LOU. What was that?

SAR. My courage. For months I have been wanting to tell you what I have decided to say to-day, but now that the time has come, I am like a child.

LOU. If what you have to say is so serious—

SAR. Serious! [*Bringing chair down on her left.*]

LOU. Perhaps you had better wait.

SAR. No, no! I must know my fate at once; and if I am bold to speak at last, it is because I have in mind how good you have always been to me.

LOU. Good! Oh, don't speak of that. But indeed I had rather you waited. If you are fearful, what shall I be?

SAR. No, I must speak. Your father has given his consent; or rather he has told me that I must first speak to you.

LOU. I understand.

SAR. I am sure you must have guessed my secret—I am in love!

LOU. Yes!

SAR. Madly—desperately—with your sister Gilberte!

LOU. With Gilberte!

SAR. Had you not noticed it?

LOU. No, I had not noticed it.

[Rises and crosses L.; sits.]

SAR. (R.) And I fancied that everyone must be laughing at me. [Puts chair back, c.]

LOU. (L.) You love my sister?

SAR. Yes: and this is what I am going to demand of your friendship. I have more confidence in you than in anyone. Tell me if you approve of my suit?

[Sits, L. C.]

LOU. (*Aside.*) Gilberte!

SAR. You do not answer.

LOU. Yes, yes, I heard. You love my sister, and you would know if I approve of your suit. Of course I do. I have not said anything to make you think I did not, have I?

SAR. No, but—

LOU. I approve—I approve.

SAR. Then you'll try and help me?

LOU. Yes. I know no one who could take better care of Gilberte than you.

[*Sartorys takes her hand, which she withdraws.*]

SAR. Thank you, thank you!

LOU. At first I was taken by surprise. One has to get used to what is new. But now, indeed, believe me, I think you are just the husband I should have chosen for Gilberte. I have thought a great deal of the chances of her marriage, and sometimes with fear, for in spite of myself her frivolity has made me anxious for her future.

SAR. Nay, you misjudge her.

LOU. But if she marries *you*, all my misgivings will be set at rest.

SAR. Do not let us speak ill of what you call her frivolity. I confess it is partly for her frivolity that I have loved her. I will try to cure her of it if you think I should; but I could only find fault very, very gently, if at all.

LOU. How you love her!

SAR. Ah, yes.

LOU. Why do you come and tell me of your love?

SAR. Your father told me I must speak to you.

LOU. Ah, I see. But now you have spoken, that is all—is it not?

SAR. No, there is a favor I have to ask you.

LOU. What is it?

SAR. I want you to speak to her.

LOU. I speak to her? [Crosses R.

SAR. Yes: If I were to try and tell her, my courage would fail me. She might laugh—and then— No, you must speak to her; tell her all the good you can of me, and even a little more—that can do no harm. And do not, I beg of you, dwell too much on the graver side of my character. Tell her that I am not half so sedate as I seem, and that in spite of my quiet nature, I love her as madly as any of the gay young fellows who surround her. Ah, if you knew how often I have envied Valreas! But ask her to believe that those who can least easily speak of love, often love most deeply.

LOU. I will speak to her, I promise. [Gives her hand.

SAR. You will?

LOU. Yes.

SAR. When?

LOU. As soon as I see her; now, before dinner.

SAR. Now?

LOU. Shall I wait?

SAR. No, no, only let me not be present.

LOU. Not if you do not wish it; but what will you do meanwhile?

SAR. I will go into the garden and walk up and down. I will keep this window in sight. If the answer is "yes," you can make me a sign. If it is no—

LOU. Well?

SAR. Then I shall ride home again.

LOU. As bad as that?

SAR. Yes or no. My life hangs on one little word.

[Goes up.

Enter GILBERTE L. 3 E., with bracelet.

GIL. Louise, fasten this for me.

LOU. What?

GIL. This bracelet. (*Louise fastens it.*) Why, how your hand shakes. (*Sartorys advances, L. C.*) Your servant, M. de Sartorys. [Gives him her left hand.

SAR. Mademoiselle!—

GIL. But your hand shakes, too! What have you been about? What! what!

LOU. Well, Monsieur, as you said you wanted a stroll before dinner—

SAR. Exactly. I am just going for a little turn.

[*Exit, c.*]

GIL. Oh, my sweet sister, how sorry I am.

LOU. Sorry?

GIL. Yes, to have come in like that and interrupted a tête a tête. But you ought not to have sent him away: I should just have bustled about a minute or two, as if I were looking for something, and then off, Frou Frou, you know, off again. Frou Frou is gone, and the tête a tête begins again better than ever.

LOU. You were quite right to come in and to stay—we were talking of you.

GIL. Of me?

LOU. M. de Sartorys wants to marry you.

GIL. What?

LOU. M. de Sartorys wants to marry you. He has spoken to papa; and papa, knowing my deep affection for you, told him to speak to me.

GIL. Wants to marry me—M. de Sartorys?

LOU. Yes.

GIL. It's impossible. You are making a mistake.

LOU. Oh, no; I am making no mistake.

GIL. Then *he* is. For surely he is in love with you.

LOU. He is in love with you.

GIL. Ah!

LOU. He told me so. He asked me to repeat to you what he had said, and—

GIL. And?—

LOU. And he is waiting for your answer.

GIL. What? all in a hurry like that, without giving me time to breathe? And he has spoken to papa?

LOU. Certainly.

GIL. What a sly fox papa is. He didn't give any answer; he shifted the burthen on to you.

LOU. He *could* not. *You* are the only person who can give an answer.

GIL. I?

LOU. Of course.

GIL. Oh, it is too serious for me. (*Cross, R.*) I have always made up my mind that when the time comes

for me to marry, I would go to my dear, sensible sister, and ask her to decide for me. [Back to c.

LOU. (L. c.) But—

GIL. No, I shall do as papa did. I shall say *you* decide. I will do as you advise.

LOU. Then I should advise—

GIL. Yes, you would advise?

LOU. I should advise you to say, Yes.

GIL. You really mean that?

LOU. Certainly; M. de Sartorys holds a very high position in the opinion of the world.

GIL. Yes, I know; rather too high, perhaps.

LOU. What do you mean?

GIL. Now, I am going to speak seriously. (*Leads her to couch, L.*) I quite appreciate all that M. de Sartorys is—I know he is a kind of man whom it is almost impossible to refuse—so much the worse for me, perhaps! I know what the world thinks of him. Somebody told me he might become a—what was it?

LOU. A minister? An ambassador?

GIL. An ambassador! I should like to be an ambassador's wife if one could live in Paris. (*Sits again, L. c.*) Yes, of course, it is very flattering to think of all he offers me. But, if I do *him* justice, I do myself justice, too! I am crippled with faults, sister mine. Oh, yes, you know it, and I know it, too. And my faults are just of the kind which I think a man like M. de Sartorys ought not to have in his wife if he did not want to be downright miserable. I know what you are going to say: he will cure me of them. I am not so sure; I've always been spoilt—first by papa, and then by you (*rises L. c.*) even more than by papa—oh, yes, even more! and the worst of it all is that I *like* my faults, and that I am not going to let myself be cured of them, because I'm very well satisfied with myself as I am. The strife between us will be a stronger one than you fancy, I think. (*Business.*) Oh, he is very strong, I know; but if he were a hundred times stronger than he is, and if he could lead the whole of Europe, that would not prove him strong enough to lead Frou Frou.

LOU. He loves you.

[Rises.

GIL. Are you quite sure?

LOU. Did you not see just now that he did?

GIL. (R. c.) He certainly did seem a little queer. So it is me he loves. How funny of him!

LOU. Is it possible that you do not *care* to be loved by a man such as he is? Is it nothing that he should tremble before you and stammer like a child and not know what to say next?

GIL. (*Noticing her sister.*) He does do that?

LOU. (*Warmly.*) Oh, I think if I were asked who is the man that I love, I should be proud to answer, "search out one who is nobler than all others; that is he."

GIL. Is he as noble as all that?

LOU. He is indeed! [Cross to L. C.]

GIL. Shall I tell you something, Louise?

[Rise and go c.]

LOU. Well, dear.

[L. C.]

GIL. I will *not* marry M. de Sartorys.

LOU. You will not? Why not?

GIL. Because I have always thought that you loved him, and because I think so still.

LOU. I?

GIL. Yes, you.

LOU. If I loved him, should I advise you to marry him?

GIL. One is never sure of anything with you. Don't I know you just the girl to sacrifice yourself for me and then to revel in your sacrifice?

LOU. Oh come little sister, you go too far; my affection for you is very deep, but not *so* deep as to make me ruin my life for you.

GIL. Honestly?

LOU. Honestly. And if that is your only objection—

GIL. Oh, no, it's not my only one. I have plenty of objections, plenty, plenty. Only, am I to listen to them, or am I not? That is what I don't know how to decide. Am I right or wrong? Well, in doubt, I shall do as I always have done; put myself in the hands of my dear old sister. You be wise for me, or foolish—the responsibility is yours. Shall I, or shall I not agree to this marriage? (*Louise begins to speak.*) Oh don't speak too soon, it is your turn to be serious now. Think it over carefully and reflect before you answer.

LOU. I have reflected.

GIL. And what do you say?

LOU. I say that I think M. de Sartorys will be too happy with you, for you not to be happy with him.

GIL. Then I am to say yes?

LOU. You are to say yes.

Enter BRIGARD, L. 3 E.

BRIG. (C.) Well, have you spoken to her?

LOU. I have.

BRIG. And—?

LOU. And she consents.

BRIG. That is a good girl!

GIL. Then you are pleased, papa? [*Sits c.*]

BRIG. (C.) Pleased! I should think I was. And now I shall have a definite answer for that ridiculous lad, Valreas.

GIL. What?

BRIG. (*Laughing.*) If he didn't want to marry too.

LOU. (*Laughing.*) So he did—I had forgotten.

GIL. (*To Brigard.*) That makes you laugh. (*Cross to c.*) (*To Louise.*) And you too. Well I dare say (*Brigard R.*), if he had spoken to me I should have laughed too. And yet, who knows, if that piece of folly would not have been wiser than this piece of wisdom? Well, it is settled anyhow.

BRIG. (R.) Of course darling, if—

GIL. (C.) If it is settled, don't let us speak of it any more. I am an ambassador!

BRIG. Then I may call poor Sartorys, who is pacing up and down outside there? [*Up R.*]

GIL. Outside?

BRIG. (*Pointing off R.*) Yes, don't you see him?

GIL. (*Moved.*) Poor fellow! Yes, call him.

BRIG. (*Calling.*) Sartorys! Come in my dear fellow, we have got something to say to you. [*Cross to L.*]

Enter VALREAS, L. 3 E. *in evening dress*, and SARTORYS *from R. C.*

VAL. There, you see I am not late for dinner. (*Looks around.*) Holloa, something is up.

[*Brigard passes at back to Valreas, L. c.*]

LOU. (*Crosses to Sartorys.*) You must dine with us to-night, Monsieur. Gilberte hopes you will stay.

GIL. (*Holding out her hand.*) Yes, I hope you will stay.

SAR. (*Kissing her hand.*) Oh, if you only knew—but—I am—

GIL. Yes, I see, I see!

VAL. (L.) (*Aside to Brigard.*) Well, what becomes of me?

BRIG. (L.) (*Aside to Valreas.*) Oh, I hope you will leave me in peace at last.

VAL. Come, I think I will go back to my supper party.

BRIG. My dear boy, the guest has departed.

VAL. Departed?

BRIG. Yes.

VAL. Furious, I suppose?

BRIG. No; consoled.

[*Goes up.*]

Enter BARON and BARONESS, R. I E.

VAL. Oh, Madame, what a lovely dress!

BARONESS. (*Aside to Valreas.*) What is the matter here?

VAL. (*Crosses to R. C. Same.*) The matter is that the brightest eyes in the world are also the sharpest.

BARONESS. Oh, what do you mean by that?

VAL. You discovered what I had not even suspected.

BARONESS. (*Looking round.*) Oh, Sartorys and Gilberte.

VAL. Yes.

BARONESS. Is it settled?

VAL. I suppose so; it looks like it. Whose music for that wedding?

BARONESS. Music of the future. We must wait and see.

VAL. Meanwhile, you know how I worship you.

BARON. (*Coming down between Valreas and Baroness.*) Fourth attempt!

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE FIRST.—*Drawing-room in the town house of Mme. de Sartorys. Sofa R, facing audience, behind a piano seen in profile. Fire-place L, table and arm-chairs, stands of flowers, ornaments, etc. Doors, R. and L. Folding door, C.*

Enter PAULINE C., *followed by* PITOU.

PAU. Are you the man who was to come from the theatre?

PIT. Yes, Mademoiselle—Pitou, second prompter—I am the man. And I have brought what M. de Valreas told me to bring.

PAU. Then you can wait?

PIT. Oh, yes, I can wait. I can wait as long as ever you like. (*Exit Pauline, R. C.*) This is a nice place. Not so elegant as our first ballet ladies' drawing-room—but more respectable. Yes, one feels that the mistress of this house is—all that she should be.

[*Gilberte outside, R. C.*

GIL. Pauline, send to the Rue de la Paix at once; I am dining out, and I must have my new dress home by six o'clock.

Enter GILBERTE, R. C.

GIL. You have been very prompt, Monsieur.

PIT. I made all the more haste when I knew the name of the lady who required my services.

GIL. Why, do you know me?

PIT. Oh, very well, Madame.

GIL. How, pray?

PIT. Well, one evening, between the acts, Mdlle. Charlotte was taking stock of the house through the hole in the "drop," and she called to M. Greluche, and said, pointing to one of the stage boxes, that is Madame de Sartorys.

GIL. Oh, indeed.

PIT. So when M. Greluche had quite done looking, I had a turn. That is how I know you, Madame. Oh, I know your father, too, Madame, very well; I have often seen him.

GIL. That will do. (*Cross L. c.*) You have brought me the copy of the burlesque?

PIT. Yes, Madame, "Indian and Charlemagne." I have written out your part myself; for if you only knew the piece from the copy in circulation, Madame, you cannot have the slightest idea of what the part really is! I have put in all the gags.

GIL. The gags?

PIT. The tricks, the embellishments, the business, as we call it, that the actors have put into the parts for themselves. The works are often not recognizable, so much are they improved from the original.

GIL. Oh, I understand—that is capital. But we shall want the music, too.

PIT. I have it here. [*Unfolds manuscript.*]

GIL. (*Taking it.*) Air, the "Whirlwind Galop;" what is the tune of that?

PIT. It is by M. Musard, the elder—so. [*Hums.*]

GIL. Do you think I shall be able to sing it?

PIT. Why, certainly, Madame! Your voice cannot be more cracked than Mdlle. Charlotte's, and yet you see what a success she has made.

GIL. But my voice is not cracked at all.

PIT. Oh, so much the better, Madame. Would you like to try over a few bars at the piano with me now, Madame?

GIL. What, can you play?

PIT. I can strum a little, Madame—enough to accompany.

GIL. I certainly should like to hear the tune. (*They go to piano and play; after a few bars Sartorys knocks at door, L. 3. E.*) Who is there? I am engaged.

SAR. (*Without, L. U. E.*) It is I, love.

GIL. Oh, if it is you, then come in.

Enter SARTORYS; PITOU rises and bows.

GIL. This is M. Pitou, from the Opera Comique. (*Pitou rises and bows.*) We are trying over the tunes for the burlesque I am to play in. (*Sartorys looks surprised.*) Come, you said I *might*, you know, when you heard it was for a charity. Go on, M. Pitou.

[*He plays.*]

SAR. If you could possibly arrange to have this rehearsal another time, Gilberte, I have something particular to say to you.

GIL. (C.) Of course, if you want me. We must finish our practice another day, M. Pitou. Can you come another day?

PIT. (C.) Whenever you like, Madame. If you will let me know by a line at my residence, opposite the theater, I shall be proud to come at any time. Madame, Monsieur, I wish you a good day. [*Bows to both.*]

SAR. Good day, sir.

[*Exit Pitou, c.*]

GIL. (R. *with pout.*) Is it something important you have to say to me?

SAR. It is, rather.

GIL. Because *this* is really important; I have to rehearse with the others to-day.

[*Reclines on couch, R., full length. Sartorys at back of couch.*]

SAR. What is it?

GIL. Why, my part in the grand performance which Madame de Cambri is getting up for that charity. Don't you recollect?

SAR. No; I think this is the first I have heard of it. What part is Madame de Cambri herself going to play in this grand performance?

GIL. Of course she will not act, herself. She will have enough to do to drill the company.

SAR. I thought so.

GIL. What do you mean?

SAR. Madame de Cambri is a clever woman in her way. *She* will not make a fool of herself. She likes to sit by and watch others do that.

GIL. You don't like her.

SAR. I neither like nor dislike her; I merely say she is a clever woman.

GIL. Well, what am I, then?

SAR. (*Looks at her and then kisses her.*) You are the sweetest and best little actress in the world!

GIL. That's right; you had something to say to me!

[*She makes room for him on couch; he sits on her left.*]

SAR. Yes.

GIL. (*Fetches manuscript and studies.*) Go on.

SAR. I am afraid, though, that it will remove you rather far from the realm of M. Pitou.

GIL. That means that it is something serious.

SAR. Yes.

GIL. (*Studying.*) Make haste and get it over then.

SAR. My dear, we cannot get it over till we begin, and we cannot begin till you give me your attention.

GIL. What kind of a costume is that of a *debardeur*.

SAR. I scarcely know.

GIL. Come, though you *are* so grave, you will not make me believe you never noticed that.

SAR. If you insist. Well, a loose silk or satin skirt or chemise, or whatever you call it, a sash and a very well-fitting pair of pantaloons, silk flesh stockings.

GIL. What else?

SAR. A little cap with a tassel.

GIL. Don't laugh at me; what other clothes?

SAR. Oh, buttons! a lot of buttons!

GIL. (*Rises.*) Well, I shall never wear such a costume as that. I must invent something. I must consult with Madame de Cambri. Go on with what you were telling me. [*Sits on his left.*]

SAR. (*After a marked pause, much annoyed.*) I had an interview with the minister this morning.

GIL. Did you tell him to come?

SAR. Come? Where?

GIL. Why, to the performance, of course. His presence would be the making of the thing.

SAR. I forgot to mention it, but I will not omit to do so next time. To-day we were speaking of my own affairs. He was good enough to beg my acceptance of a foreign post of importance.

GIL. (*Disturbed.*) A foreign post!

SAR. Yes: I have no very brilliant future in Paris.

GIL. What foreign post?

SAR. That of minister at Carlsruhe.

GIL. Minister at Carlsruhe. That is an honour, is it not?

SAR. It is an honour!

GIL. Ah!—how far is it from Paris to Carlsruhe?

SAR. I do not know, exactly. About a hundred and fifty or two hundred miles.

GIL. As far as to Baden?

SAR. Yes. Baden is close by.

GIL. Close by! (*Rises.*) Why did you not say so at once! You said a foreign post.

SAR. Oh, yes: Baden is only a few miles off.

[*Rises.*
GIL. (L. C.) Well, of course then it is easily settled. I can go and spend the whole summer with you at Baden, and during the remainder of the year you must come and see me in Paris as often as you can.

SAR. (R. C.) Indeed.

GIL. And mind—I don't promise anything—but if you are very good, perhaps I will sometimes come and see you at Carlsruhe during the winter. But I don't *promise*.

SAR. I am afraid I don't quite see the advantages of that arrangement.

GIL. You do not mean to say you intended me to *live* at Carlsruhe.

SAR. Certainly! I did!

GIL. What! all the year round? we two buried alive down there together—*alone*?

SAR. Why not?

GIL. But we should die—(*Sartorys looks at her*) of happiness, perhaps—but still we certainly should die! Come, you are joking! Could you fancy Paris without Frou Frou, or Frou Frou without Paris?

SAR. Well, I think if I tried very hard, I could fancy Paris without Frou Frou.

GIL. (*Disappointedly.*) Could you?

SAR. But not Frou Frou without Paris!

GIL. What is to be done, then?

SAR. I only see two courses open to me. One is to go to Carlsruhe without you—the other is to refuse the post.

GIL. Have you made up your mind which to follow?

SAR. Yes—quite!

GIL. (*Anxiously.*) You will go to Carlsruhe without me?

SAR. No, I shall refuse the post.

GIL. Ah, that *is* good of you! That is right.

SAR. Is it right? I don't know. I only know that I could not do otherwise.

GIL. You still love me a little, then, though we have been married four years?

SAR. Yes: I think I love you too well; but I don't think I have learned the right way to love you yet.

GIL. Oh, yes you have! The right way for a husband to love his wife is to do all that she wishes, for then, out of a mere sense of justice, the wife does all the husband wishes.

SAR. Will you do what I wish now?

GIL. I will do *anything* you like.

SAR. Then give up playing in these theatricals.

GIL. Oh, Henri! [Crosses, L. C.; sits.]

SAR. Well?

GIL. (*Sits, R.*) I thought you would ask something sensible—something that I *could* grant. How *can* I give up acting now, when I have promised, and when the whole thing would fall through if I refused. (*Returns to him.*) Besides you will see I shall look so pretty with rouge on, and *quite* proper. I mean to invent a dress—*something* like the stage dress—but quite different. And I shall act so well. You will be sitting there in front, and when all the people clap their hands and say: "Bravo!" you will be able to say: "Ah, that's *my* wife!" and you will feel *so* proud!

SAR. Shall I? (*Rises.*) Well, I must go and take my reply to the cabinet.

GIL. Yes, do, and then it will be quite safe. (*Crosses to R. C.*) I wish I had not my part to learn. Georgie and I could walk a little way with you.

SAR. Georgie! Surely the child is not well enough to go out to-day.

GIL. Not well enough?

SAR. Did you not know he was ailing?

GIL. How should I know what no one tells me. (*Rings impatiently.*) I have told Pauline a hundred times to bring him to my room before I get up.

Enter PAULINE, R. C.

PAU. Is it for the dress, Madame? It is here.

GIL. (*Crosses R.*) No, it is not about the dress. Why did you not bring Master Georgie to me this morning as usual?

PAU. Well, Madame, when Miss Simpson brought him to see you in bed yesterday morning, you said she woke you up and you were annoyed.

SAR. (*To Pauline.*) That will do, you can leave us.

[*Exit Pauline R. C.*]

GIL. (*Annoyed.*) Annoyed! Pauline presumes.

SAR. That is why I sent her away. But she was right.

GIL. You are unkind.

SAR. Well, I must be off. [Up at door L. 3 E.]

GIL. Henri!

SAR. Yes.

GIL. Kiss me before you go. [Sitting c.]

SAR. (*Returning and kissing her.*) Ah Frou Frou!

GIL. Come back soon: I should like to hear what the minister says before I go out to dinner.

[*Goes to couch R.; sits.*]

SAR. You are dining out?

GIL. Don't you remember? with Madame de Cambri to discuss our costumes for the theatricals. Shall you dine at the Club?

SAR. No I must stay at home. I have to write.

GIL. You will be all alone!

SAR. Oh no, I shall keep Georgie with me! Good bye. [Exit, L. 3 E.]

GIL. Georgie! I know what he means! But it is very unjust of him! (*Looks at clock.*) How the time goes! Ten minutes to three! (*Sits.*) I must study my part. (*Repeats from part.*) One would think to hear Henri talk, that I do not love my child. I love him as all women of the world love their children. Of course I cannot go walking with him myself in the Tuilleries—carrying his hoop! Though I believe it would be great fun. (*Jumps up.*) Shall I go now? I forgot. Ten minute to three and Mme. de Cambri comes with M. de Valreas at three o'clock to rehearse—and I don't know a word of my part! Come I *must* be serious.

[*Sits at piano strumming and singing.*]

Enter BRIGARD, c.

GIL. (*Singing.*) "My figure is neat,
And so are my feet."

BRIG. (*At door.*) "And I am very light to carry."

GIL. (*Laughing.*) Oh papa, are you there?

BRIG. (*Advancing.*) Ah! how charmingly Dejaset used to play that part! Dejaset!

GIL. What of her papa?

BRIG. And Ochard—what fire!

(*Singing.*) "And I've a soul
Like a burning coal,
And I'm told I ought to marry."

(*Speaking.*) You go on.

GIL. (*Singing from MSS.*)

"I've a sweet pretty waist,
And a charming taste,
And a spotless reputation."

BRIG. (*Speaking.*) Ah, you should put more *go* into that.

(*Singing.*) "And a spotless reputation."

(*Speaking.*) Coyly, you see.

(*Singing.*) "I've lots of gold,
But it's pledged, I'm told,
To a very near relation."

BOTH. (*Singing.*) "How much { he has } pledged
to a near relation." { I have }

GIL. (*Laughing.*) What children we are!

BRIG. (L. c.) Ah! the actresses of now-a-days can't hold a candle to what *I* can recollect.

GIL. Nonsense, papa. I see you enjoy yourself very much when you go to the theatre. Thank you for rehearsing with me, though. And now, how are you? And how is Louise?

BRIG. (L. c.) Oh, she is very well. But I have come to speak to you about Louise.

GIL. (c.) About Louise?

BRIG. Yes, I am going away for a little change of air. I am not well.

GIL. Not well? Oh, I *am* sorry! Where shall you go?

BRIG. To a health resort—in Bohemia.

GIL. In Bohemia? What a strange place. Will Louise like it?

BRIG. Well, that's just the point. I'm afraid I could scarcely take Louise with me.

GIL. Not take her? Why not?

BRIG. Well—it's difficult to explain.

GIL. You will be so lonely.

BRIG. No, I don't think I shall be lonely. The fact is, I am going with a lady friend who is anxious to meet with a pleasant travelling companion to pay all the—I mean half the expenses of the trip.

GIL. Oh, I see! Well, of course Louise must come and stay with us.

BRIG. That is what I tell her. But, if you would believe me, she wants to go and spend three months in a convent.

[Sits L. C.]

GIL. In a convent? What nonsense! It is bad enough that she should be so obstinate in refusing every proposal of marriage that is made to her, but to go into a convent! Why, she might never come out again—she is so odd. No, no, she must come here; not for three months, nor for six months, but for her life, if I can persuade her. You know how I love you and Louise. I grow quite serious when I think of you both, and it seems so hard that I may not have my own sister beside me. I cannot make out why Louise always refuses to come to our house.

BRIG. I suppose she has been afraid of being in your way.

GIL. Why, we have four spare bed-rooms.

BRIG. But I mean conjugally in the way.

GIL. She need not fear! Besides, I could have understood that reason when we were still in our honeymoon, but not after all this time.

[Gets around to back of H. L.]

BRIG. You had better not tell *her* that.

GIL. I shall tell her whatever is necessary to make her remain with us.

BRIG. I am afraid you will not succeed unless you shut the doors on her when she comes to-day to bid you good-bye. She is strangely headstrong on this point.

GIL. (*Sits.*) Failing persuasion, I will *lock* her in; for she shall stay. And as for being in our way, it's perfectly ridiculous.

BRIG. You say that rather lightly, child. (*Rises.*) You are not unhappy by any chance? Because, if you were, it would be my duty as a father—

GIL. You are dreaming, papa. Unhappy? (*Laughs.*) (R. C.) Frou Frou unhappy?

BRIG. It is unlikely. Still, if there ever should be aught amiss, I say as a father—

GIL. Yes, I know. But I can't help thinking how funny it is that you should be going to Bohemia!

[*Brigard turns away embarrassed.*]

Enter MME. DE CAMBRI, C.

MME. DE C. (C.) May I come in?

GIL. (R. C.) Do. I am quite ready for you, dear.

BRIG. (*Advancing L. C.*) Dear Baroness, how glad I am to have this opportunity of bidding you good-bye.

MME. DE C. (C.) Oh, you bad man! So you are determined on this mysterious trip to Vienna?

GIL. (R. C.) Vienna! Papa is going to Bohemia—for his health.

MME. DE C. (*Concealing her laughter.*) Is he? Poor fellow! he does look very much out of sorts. But I suppose folks will be homesick now and then.

BRIG. Madame, I implore you—

GIL. What do you mean?

BRIG. (*Crosses, c.*) You must not take any notice of what Madame le Baronne says, Gilberte. She is always inventing unkind jokes about me. Well, good-bye, dear, mind you keep Louise.

GIL. Indeed I will.

BRIG. Madame, I lay my homage at your feet.

MME. DE C. (L.) Farewell, Bohemian!

BRIG. (C.) Spare my grey hairs!

MME. DE C. Your what?

BRIG. You are right. I always forget that I have never considered myself worthy to wear them. [*Exit c.*]

MME. DE C. (L. C.) What was your father saying just now about your keeping Louise? Where should you keep her?

GIL. (R. C.) Here, of course.

MME. DE C. While your father is away?

GIL. Yes, and afterwards, if she will but agree to the plan I mean to suggest to her. I want Louise to live with us here. [*Goes around and sits L.*]

MME. DE C. Indeed! Will you take her to Carlsruhe?

GIL. To Carlsruhe?

MME. DE C. M. de Sartorys has just been appointed minister there, has he not? Are you not going to live there?

GIL. I am certainly not going to live in Carlsruhe.

MME. DE C. What? M. de Sartorys goes alone?

GIL. No, he declines the post.

MME. DE C. Declines. My dear, make much of such a husband, he is a marvel. It is needless to ask now if he consents to your appearing in these theatricals.

GIL. (*Tossing her head.*) Consents? Of course he consents.

MME. DE C. (*Laughing.*) I thought so. Do you know your part?

GIL. Not quite.

MME. DE C. We must rehearse.

GIL. Of course. I have rehearsed.

MME. DE C. Well, you know I believe the thing is going to be a big go. I think we shall make heaps of money—or, rather, *you*—because it is to see *you* that people will come.

GIL. How delightful!

MME. DE C. Fancy; just before I came out, a man came to take seats for the libraries.

GIL. Really?

MME. DE C. Yes, and he offered me five hundred francs premiums.

GIL. (*Delighted.*) Nonsense. Did you take it?

MME. DE C. I did. It was for the poor. Here it is, for of course it belongs to you.

GIL. (*Taking note.*) I must send it at once to M. le Curé. (*Writes at table.*) Shall I tell him how I got it?

MDM. DE C. I think not. Not now.

GIL. No, better not. One day I will ask him to dinner and confess it—at dessert—in such a way that he

will be quite pleased. (*Rings bell and gives note to Footman.*) Send this round at once. [*Exit Footman.*]

GIL. You know the people will be hard to please when they have paid a louis for their seats.

MME. DE C. Oh, I have the greatest confidence in you and in M. de Valreas.

GIL. Why he will never know his part.

MME. DE C. Never mind—he has one essential qualification of a good actor.

GIL. What is that?

MME. DE C. He is madly in love with the woman with whom he has to act.

GIL. Madly in love! What nonsense! You ought to know M. de Valreas better.

MME. DE C. Oh, my dear, it is precisely because I do know him so well, that I am able to distinguish. *I* know what he is like when he is *playing* at love, and I see now, and for the first time, that he is in love in earnest.

GIL. You have lost your senses. M. de Valreas has not a heart to love with.

Enter FOOTMAN, C.

FOOTMAN. M. de Valreas. [*Exit Footman.*]

MME. DE C. Here he is; so we will just see.

[*Crosses, R.*]

Enter VALREAS, C.

VAL. (*Shaking hands.*) Am I late?

MME. DE C. Less than usual. But do you know I have won my bet? The news was true. M. de Sartorys has been offered the post of minister at Carlsruhe. He and his wife leave in a week.

VAL. Impossible! (*To Gilberte.*) You are going away?

GIL. (*Laughing constrainedly.*) No, no, it was a joke. Let us rehearse. (*Crosses, C.*)

MME. DE C. (*R.*) (*Aside to Gilberte.*) Was I right?

GIL. (*C.*) Why don't we begin?

VAL. (*L.*) That was a very poor joke of yours, Madame. I don't see the point of it. But never mind! Which scene shall we take?

GIL. Let us try the last. We have never rehearsed that.

VAL. Very well, the last scene.

MME. DE C. I will prompt.

VAL. Prompt me sometimes.

[*Places chair for Baroness with back to audience.*]

GIL. Yes, you will want it! It is all very well for you to say the last scene. You will never know either the first or the last.

VAL. What an insult, when I have been up with it all night.

GIL. But the scene?

VAL. Ah, yes, of course, the scene; we'll act the scene directly. (*Places two chairs in center of stage, back to back.*) There's the wall dividing the two rooms, and here, (*fetching a smaller chair, which he places between the two,*) between these two positions is the door. Now, then, Indian in her room, and Charlemagne in his.

GIL. Nothing of the kind! In the last scene—

BARONESS. In the last scene she is in his room.

VAL. Ah, yes; and he is in her's; you're right. Here we are, then.

[*Places himself, L. C., at back of c. chair.*]

GIL. Here we are then. (*Stands R. of c. chair.*) (*To the Baroness.*) Is the prompter ready?

BARONESS. (*Sitting, back to audience.*) The prompter is at his post. Give me the prompt-book. (*Valreas hands book.*) And now go on.

GIL. (*To Valreas.*) We begin from where the landlord has gone—

VAL. To fetch the broker.

GIL. Just so.

VAL. Your cue to speak is (*in a gruff voice,*) "Keep watch on the door."

GIL. He—is—gone.

VAL. (*Acting.*) Bravo. Hurrah!

GIL. "But if he comes back and the broker with him? Come, now, I say, sir, (*sits,*) no nonsense.

BARONESS. Ah! that's very good!

GIL. Isn't it, now? "Come, I say, sir, no nonsense!" (*To Baroness.*) And you'll see I shall do it even better on the night of the performance.

BARONESS. (*To Valreas.*) Now, then, you. (*Prompting.*) "Ah, a thought!"

VAL. Yes, yes, I know without the part (*acting*), "Ah, a thought strikes me! I shall clear out from my lodgings. I shall transfer my moveables to your apartment."

GIL. (*Acting.*) To mine, indeed?

VAL. (*Acting.*) Why not, since I'm going to marry you.

GIL. (*Acting.*) Honour bright?

BARONESS. No! no! That's marked here to be spoken with spirit.

GIL. How?

BARONESS. So: "Honour bright?" Sharply!

GIL. Oh! I wasn't sharp enough?

BARONESS. Certainly not. You spoke it (*imitating*) "Honour bright."

GIL. Would you mind our beginning again, M. de Valreas?

VAL. Most happy, Madame, to do as you wish.

GIL. Well, then, if you'll just repeat your line—

VAL. (*Acting.*) "Since I'm going to marry you."

GIL. (*Excited.*) "Honour bright?" (*To Baroness.*) I hope this time—

BARONESS. Yes, this time it's all right.

GIL. "Honour bright?"

VAL. Zooks! open the door.

GIL. Oh, dear no! (*To Baroness.*) What do I do, then?

BARONESS. You look out of the window. .

GIL. (*Going to window.*) True, so I do. "Ah, there's the broker. My gracious, what an awfully long nose he has."

VAL. I'll make it longer still for him. Open the door.

BARONESS. Then you open the door of communication.

GIL. (*Throws down c. chair.*) Very well, open the door and let me see. What do I say? Ah, I know. (*Beckoning to Valreas.*) "Quick, make haste."

VAL. (*Jumps over chair.*) Bravo, and first—

GIL. Ah, what are you doing?

MME. DE C. Yes, yes, he is right. (*Quoting from book.*) "Kisses her passionately."

GIL. Is that in the book?

MME. DE C. Yes.

GIL. (*Crossing and taking book from Mme. de C.*) Let me see. (*Looks at book carefully and returns it.*) Well, we must skip that bit.

VAL. Skip it? Do you suppose I am going to skip the only good thing in the part? I only undertook it because of that bit. [*Sits L.*]

GIL. On the day of the performance, I will see, perhaps.

VAL. I daresay. Then I shall do it badly, because I have had no rehearsal.

GIL. Come, let us get on.

VAL. No, no. I shall not play any more.

GIL. Manager, what is to be done?

MME. DE C. What would you have me say? He has right on his side.

GIL. Right on his side?

MME. DE C. Most certainly.

GIL. Then I am to allow it?

MME. DE C. Remember it is for the poor.

GIL. (*Moved.*) Well, come, then, since it's for the poor.

VAL. (*Rises; moved also.*) Ah, that is better. "Bravo! But first let me—" [*Stops confused.*]

MME. DE C. Come, it is your fault now!

VAL. Very likely. But I can't act with you looking on.

MME. DE C. Well, really now!

VAL. I beg your pardon, Madame! Let me try again. (*Acting.*) "Bravo! But first—"

[*Rushes to Gilberte and lightly kisses the back of her hair; door c. opens; all confused.*]

Enter LOUISE C.; all move.

VAL. Oh, take care, Mademoiselle, take care.

[*Replaces chairs.*]

LOU. (C.) Thank you.

[*Comes down.*]

GIL. (R.) You see we were rehearsing!

LOU. (R. C.) I am truly sorry to have interrupted you.

MME. DE C. (L.) But I am glad you did. I have an appointment at five o'clock, and I had forgotten all about it. (*Cross to Gilberte.*) Don't forget that you dine with me.

GIL. Oh, I shall not forget.

MME. DE C. Au revoir, my love. (*Aside to Gilberte.*) Are you determined to try and keep her?

GIL. Of course I am—if I can.

MME. DE C. Well, well! Good bye Louise. (*To Valreas.*) Are you coming with me?

VAL. I am at your service.

MME. DE C. And the next rehearsal?

GIL. Oh, we will talk of that this evening.

MME. DE C. (*Points to Valreas.*) And let him know?
[*Goes up.*]

GIL. And let him know.

VAL. (*About to exit; crosses to Gilberte.*) I shall await my orders.

[*Exeunt Mme. de Cambri and Valreas, L. C.*]

GIL. (*Kissing Louise.*) Louise, dear Louise!

LOU. Well!

GIL. (*Kissing her.*) I do love you so!

LOU. Why, what is wrong, dear?

GIL. Don't you know?

LOU. No.

GIL. Something very, very nice, has happened to me.

LOU. What?

GIL. I have half a mind to let you guess, but I don't suppose you would ever guess right. So I'll just tell you.

LOU. Come, make haste.

GIL. Imagine that I have a sister.

LOU. Well!

GIL. A dear, dear sister, from whom I have been parted for four years; and that suddenly I see my way to keeping her beside me for the rest of my life.

LOU. What nonsense you are talking!

GIL. Not at all, I am telling you the real truth. You are here for good: now that you have come, you shall never leave the house again; I have settled it all with papa.

[*They rise, Louise gets L., Gilberte R. C.*]

LOU. What?

Enter SARTORYS, C.

SAR. (C.) How do you do, Louise? I have just heard you had come.

GIL. (R. C.) Have you seen the minister?

SAR. Yes.

GIL. What did he say?

SAR. Never mind. That is done with.

GIL. Ah, I do love you for that; and see, to console you I have found a diplomatic mission for you at home, since you are not to have one abroad.

SAR. A mission?

GIL. Yes, and a very important one. Papa is going away for three months; Louise must come to me during that time; and after that time—

SAR. Why, of course, she must still stay on with us.

GIL. Yes, you must persuade her to do so. Will you?

SAR. Of course.

LOU. But—

GIL. Ah, no buts! (*To Sartorys.*) (*Crosses, c.*) I know she will refuse at first. She will say she is afraid of being in our way. You must tell her that she does not know what she is talking about, and that she will be of immense use and service to us. But you know how to get round Louise. She will soon consent to stay if you make her believe that she has duties to fulfill here. Tell her that there is no end of tiresome things to do in this house. She likes tiresome things, whilst I—*hate* them. (*To Louise.*) You shall see to them all for me. Won't that be nice? Here, I have no time to say more. Oh, yes, by the way, little Georgie just worships his Auntie Louise. For recreation you shall play with the child. I can never give him a moment, poor lamb. (*Points to Sartorys.*) And as for him, you can think how well it fits in that you should have come to-night. I am going to desert him; you shall take my place. Good-bye. (*Business.*) Not a word. I shall tell them to prepare your room. [*Business. Exit, R. C.*]

SAR. (R. C.) Of course you know I shall not permit any discussion on this point, Louise. You stay with us; so that is settled

LOU. (L. c.) Oh, no, that is not settled at all.

SAR. Not even if I scold?

LOU. Not even if you scold.

SAR. Not if I beg?

LOU. Not if you beg. (*Sits, L. c.*)

SAR. (*At back of L. T.*) And yet Gilberte is right; you would be of the greatest service and help to us. A home is apt to be a little comfortless, unless the tiresome things to which Gilberte alluded, are done by somebody.

LOU. I should think so.

SAR. (*After pause.*) Gilberte does not always do them. Oh do not imagine that I complain of her. (*At back of L. table.*) Who would expect a butterfly to do the work of a busy bee. I told you long ago that I loved your sister for her very frivolity. I love her for it still—only I love her more than ever, though sometimes my heart misgives me lest—

LOU. Lest?

SAR. Lest she should not return my love as I once hoped that she would learn to do.

LOU. Ah, do not say that.

SAR. I would not say it to anyone but you—you, who first advised me to try my chance with her! Do you remember?

LOU. Shall I ever forget?

SAR. And even to you—even to myself, I scarcely dare confess my fears, for it seems to give them shape! But listen—you shall judge: This morning I was appointed to the post of—perhaps you have heard.

LOU. Yes I have heard.

SAR. Well, when I told Gilberte of it, she said she could never live away from Paris.

LOU. What did you do?

SAR. I refused the appointment, of course.

LOU. You refused?

SAR. Why, yes. I did that as easily for her as I would give her a bouquet. I refused because I love her, but I fear she *let* me refuse because she did not love me.

LOU. No, no. It was thoughtlessness on her part.

SAR. Ah, just so—thoughtlessness—which I might have cured in her—so I have no right to complain! When you gave Gilberte to me as you did—

LOU. As I did!

SAR. You said I was just the husband for her, and that her lightness would cause you no further trouble when you knew her to be the wife of a wise man such as I. Ah, you did not foresee what a fool a wise man may become. I have spoilt her, and spoilt her wilfully, because I have loved her blindly; and if she does not love *me*, it is my own fault, for I have not taught her to respect me!

LOU. Come, you exaggerate. She is thoughtless, but she loves you, I am sure, and her child, too.

SAR. Yes, she worships *Georgie*. When he was ill she spent nights beside his bed. Of course, sometimes she is pre-occupied, and then she scarcely sees him for days.

LOU. What? Who takes care of him?

SAR. The governess; and I—when I can.

LOU. This is terrible!

SAR. No, no; you give it too harsh a name.

LOU. But don't you remonstrate with her?

SAR. I cannot! I should have begun sooner. And, after all, these are but small blemishes, and I sometimes think we might easily spoil the whole fabric by venturing to meddle with such a wayward bit of creation. No, Louise, there is only one thing to be done, and *Gilberte* has told you what it is. You must come and live here.

LOU. Impossible!

SAR. Nay, I should not have told you all this if I had not thought to convince you that it is a duty for you to come and help us. If you would consent to perform these tiresome things which *Gilberte*—well, we will say neglects, I believe all would yet come right.

LOU. It must not be. No, you yourself must lead *Frou Frou* back to the right path. Believe me it is the only safe course.

SAR. Oh, it is all very well for you to say that. I know you are right, but I know, also, that I never shall have the courage to resist the smallest of my darling's wishes. I ought to be ashamed to confess it, but so it is. It is little enough that is amiss with us, Louise, but still—I cannot deny it—there *is* something. A

something against which we ourselves are powerless, but to withstand which, *you*, I believe, could do much.

LOU. What shall I think?

SAR. Think that I know best.

LOU. I dare not.

[*Rise and go c.*]

SAR. Ah, I see we hold you! Gilberte was right—if you believe that there is a task to accomplish by remaining—you will remain.

LOU. Is this all true that you have been telling me?

SAR. Yes, Louise, yes. Whatever way I take to tell it you—it *is* true. It is a good wind that has sent you to us to-day. Take my word for it.

LOU. (*Aside.*) I take her place.

SAR. You will stay?

LOU. (*Aside.*) Heaven guide me aright. (*Aloud.*) Yes, I will stay.

SAR. Ah! thank you, thank you, dear sister.

[*Moves up.*]

Enter FOOTMAN with lamps.

LOU. (*Aside.*) And *this* is the happiness that I thought to secure for them!

Enter GILBERTE, R. C., in evening dress, GEORGIE hiding in her skirts.

GIL. (*To Footman.*) Call up the carriage. I am late. (*Exit Footman.*) (*To Sartorys.*) Ah! I see that she has consented.

SAR. Yes, she has consented.

GIL. This is a good day. (*Makes a quick step towards Louise. The child is on her dress.*) Ah, take care, my new dress, you will tear it.

[*Pushes him away rather sharply.*]

LOU. Come to me, darling.

GIL. There, don't cry. Go to your dear Auntie?

GEORGIE. Will you build me a house of cards?

LOU. Indeed I will.

[*Takes him on her lap.*]

GIL. There, you see how right you were to stay, Louise. Georgie won't miss his evening play, and Henri will have a companion at dinner. (*To Sartorys.*) Let me leave you cosily in your own arm chair. (*Sartorys sits; she spreads newspapers and letters before him on*

table.) There are your letters and your beloved newspapers. And you, Louise, in my own corner by the fire.

Enter FOOTMAN, c.

FOOTMAN. The carriage is at the door, Madame.

GIL. Very well; I must go. (*Runs to c. d.*) You look so comfortable there, all three together. (*Kisses her hand to Sartorys.*) There is a kiss for you. (*To Louise.*) And one for you. (*To child.*) And one for my little Georgie. Good night!

[*Pauline appears in doorway, and places a cloak about Gilberte's shoulders.*]

DROP.

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE FIRST.—*Same as Act Second.*

GILBERTE *discovered*; rings bell. *Enter FOOTMAN, c.*

GIL. Has the messenger not yet returned from M. de Valreas?

FOOTMAN. Not yet, Madame.

GIL. Bring me the note the moment it comes. That will do. (*Exit Footman, c.*) I wonder what his answer will be? I told him to leave Paris at once, and never to see me again, and of course he will go—he must.

Enter BARONESS, c.

BARONESS. How do you do? Yes, it is I. Quick, get on your things, I want you to come out with me to the Bazaar.

GIL. I had forgotten. Well, you must go alone my dear.

BARONESS. Why?

GIL. I am not going out.

BARONESS. Nonsense.

GIL. No, its not nonsense. But don't let me prevent you.

BARONESS. Oh, no, I shall certainly go, whether you come or not. But let me just look at you, my Gilberte.

GIL. Well!

BARONESS. Oh, it's not well. What is the matter? Why are you so grave? I do not like to see merry people suddenly become grave; it always means something.

GIL. It does not mean anything.

BARONESS. No? Will you promise me that that ruffled brow has nothing to do with a certain young scatterbrain of our acquaintance? [Sits R. of table.]

GIL. You mean M. de Valreas. [Sits L. of table.]

BARONESS. Yes.

GIL. Well, I am troubled about M. de Valreas.

BARONESS. Oh, Gilberte! Gilberte!

GIL. But it is not in the way that you fancy,—as I shall be able to prove to you immediately.

Enter FOOTMAN, C., note on salver.

GIL. Is that the answer to my note?

FOOTMAN. Yes, Madame. *(Hands note.)*

[Exit Footman, C.]

GIL. Ah! *(Reads note and passes it to Baroness.)*
See!

BARONESS. *(Reading.)* "You bid me go; I leave Paris to-night."

GIL. There, you see.

BARONESS. I see that the evil is a great deal worse even than I feared. For him to send you such an answer. I scarcely like to think of the way in which you must have written to him.

GIL. I simply bade him go without a moment's delay.

BARONESS. You bade him go? So that is the point that matters have reached. Come, Gilberte, come—you know how I laughed at the whole affair two months ago, when we were getting up those theatricals. Let me laugh at it still. Do not force me to believe that you are less sensible than I thought you—less sensible than I would be myself. For you know *I* would as soon have a thrashing for fun after I had one from necessity, as listen to any man who proposed that I should love

him better than I love M. de Cambri. And how was I to guess that your principles were not as good as mine? To think that this madcap of a Valreas, a mere lad, should become—I will not say dangerous—

GIL. You may say it.

BARONESS. But I *will* not.

GIL. Then I will. Dangerous! Yes, dangerous, and I almost thank him for it; for, to tell the truth, this sudden conviction of danger is the first really serious thought that I have ever had. And one serious thought has brought others in its train.

BARONESS. (*Interrupting.*) But, my dear, you must not let yourself indulge in serious thoughts.

GIL. (*Disregarding her.*) Yes, a hundred others that ought to have occurred to me long ago; and I understand many things now that never struck me in their true light before. For instance, when I told you that Louise was coming to live with us, do you remember what you said?

BARONESS. Did I say anything?

GIL. You said, "Indeed!"

BARONESS. Was that all?

GIL. Yes, that was all; but you said it in a peculiar way. And since—when I have watched my sister take *my* place, unawares and slowly, in my house, beside my husband and my child—when I have felt how much less I liked it than I thought to do—I have often remembered the way in which you said "Indeed."

BARONESS. You see more in things than you should.

GIL. I only see what is there! No, *you* foresaw what would happen, and if I had not been a child I would have foreseen it too! (*Crosses to R.*) But perhaps you did not foresee, *also*, of what I should be capable, and that rather than let matters go on as they have been doing, I should take a very strong line of my own!

BARONESS. A line of your own? Do you mean to say that you are going to be in earnest?

GIL. In earnest? Yes, I think so, at last.

BARONESS. My dear girl what do you intend to do? You frighten me.

GIL. I intend to take back that place which is my right here, and from which I have been thrust. I in-

tend to lead a different life to that which I have led up till now. (*Baroness smiles.*) Do you not believe me?

BARONESS. Yes, yes! [*Rises.*]

GIL. At all events, whether you believe me or whether you do not, I mean to do it. [*Sits R.*]

BARONESS. Let me give you a piece of advice first, dear. Come out in the victoria with me, let yourself be seen everywhere; run up two thousand francs of debt before dinner time; show yourself in the Bois de Boulogne and at the Opera in the most extravagant of costumes; do anything to make yourself talked about, to make folk say you are lost, for believe me, you will be saved! You think the horses are going too fast; you are frightened and you want to jump; you will kill yourself, and perhaps others, in your fall! Do not jump: whip up the team and go faster than ever—that is your only wise course. Well, will you think of what I say, and come to the Bazaar?

GIL. I will not! [*Crosses to L.*]

BARONESS. You are wrong. Goodby my dear.

GIL. Goodby.

BARONESS. (*Returning.*) Gilberte I implore you, if you will not follow my first and best piece of advice, listen at least to this: go and lock yourself in your room and stay there for forty-eight hours without speaking to anyone, without even thinking! You are not in a fit state to think. You positively terrify me.

GIL. Nonsense! I never was calmer in my life.

BARONESS. Oh, goodby, then—goodby.

[*Exit Baroness, C. ; Gilberte rings bell.*]

Enter PAULINE, R. 3 E.

PAU. Yes, Madame.

GIL. Has M. Sartorys gone out?

PAU. I think not, Madame.

GIL. Let him know that I would like to speak with him.

PAU. Yes, Madame. [*Exit Pauline, L. 3 E.*]

Gil. (*Reading note.*) Poor fellow! the Baroness was right! Who would ever have thought that he could love as deeply as he loves me now. For he does love me! Yes, and he must go to night. Well, it is right.

I am pleased with him and pleased with myself. (*Tears
note and throws it in the fire.*) So there is an end of
that! (*Rises and crosses c.*) And now for my rights!
Shall I be strong enough to win back my own place, or
will Louise?—Ah, we shall see!

Enter LOUISE in walking dress, R. 3 E.

LOU. (R. c., *preoccupied.*) Good morning, Frou
Frou.

GIL. (L. c.) (*Coldly.*) Are you going out?

LOU. Yes, and I must be off; I am late.

Enter SARTORYS, L. 3 E.

SAR. (L. c.) You wanted me, love?

GIL. (C.) Yes; I will speak with you presently if you
can spare me a few moments. (*To Louise.*) Where
are you going? [*Sartorys gets round to L.*

LOU. (R. c., *surprised.*) How can that interest you? I
am only going to inquire of Madame de Lussy about a
governess we think of engaging for Georgie.

GIL. (*Aside.*) We think! (*Aloud.*) I will go myself.

SAR. (L. c. *smiling.*) If you go we shall all know
what to expect! Madame de Lussy and you will invent
a fascinating new costume—and forget all about the
governess.

GIL. Perhaps you are right.

LOU. (*To Sartorys.*) Do not forget that at three
o'clock you (*crosses to c.*) have an appointment with
the agent about that estate we were thinking of buying.

GIL. (*Aside.*) We were thinking!

SAR. (*Laughing.*) I will not forget, Mademoiselle. I
will not forget!

LOU. Is that all I had to say to you? Yes, I think
that is all. (*Kissing Gilberte.*) Goodby, dear, I shall
be home in time for Georgie's dinner.

GIL. Very well.

[*Exit Louise, c.*

SAR. (*Pleasantly.*) Well, what is the audience to be
about.

GIL. (C.) Well—

SAR. It seems to be a serious matter.

GIL. Yes, it is.

SAR. And rather hard to say.

GIL. Very hard to say—its a kind of confession!

[Sits on stool L. C., R. of Sartorys.]

SAR. A confession?

GIL. Yes. I have done wrong and I want to tell you about it.

SAR. Debts, Frou Frou?

GIL. (*Vexed.*) Oh, no, nothing of that kind.

SAR. What else can you have to accuse yourself of?

GIL. Can you not guess? Of never having been in earnest—more than that—of having been light and frivolous and thoughtless—oh yes! Even after our marriage. (*Business.*) For even after Georgie was born, when I might have learned to be something better than Frou Frou.

SAR. Why, you almost me make uneasy.

GIL. You are not angry? I mean have you not *been* angry, for of course now I mean to be different.

SAR. Angry? Am I so very strict that you think I must needs be angry about such trifles?

GIL. Trifles?

SAR. Yes, the merest trifles.

GIL. But a little while ago you talked quite differently! At least you did not *talk*. I think you scarcely dared to *say* much, but you looked it! You did disapprove of my frivolity then, and sometimes—when your fear of displeasing me allowed you to speak—you even showed me its dangers! Why have you changed your mind?

SAR. That was two months ago.

GIL. Well, what has happened in those two months?

SAR. Why, Louise has come to live with us.

GIL. Ah! Louise!

SAR. All the dangers which I used to fear then, have vanished, and now even if Frou Frou should want to be more Frou Frou than ever, no one would object since there is some one in her place to fulfill the—

GIL. (*Interrupting.*) Ah! but supposing I chose to do the things that Louise does, myself?

SAR. Surely that would be waste labour, now that things are so comfortable.

GIL. Ah, you think things are comfortable?

SAR. Certainly. Look around you dearest, and tell

me if ever a house was better ordered than yours is since Louise has taken it under her care: See how well she brings up our child. The boy scarcely ever cries now, and as for myself do you not notice how prosperous I have grown to look of late?

GIL. And yet, supposing I were determined to try my own hand again: to take care of you and George myself.

SAR. Well, I should not like to crush such laudable ambition. Try by all means. But—

GIL. But?

SAR. If after a week, or let us say, a fortnight, you found you did not like the work, if you required the *whole* of your leisure for the invention of such pretty little conceits as these for instance, (*touches the bows on her dress,*) do not consider yourself bound by this that you have said to me. I give you my word that I will never “look” my disapproval again. Why should I trouble you now that it is unnecessary? Why should I meddle with my happiness? Can you not see, little one, that I am proud to be the husband of Mme. de Sartorys, the best dressed, prettiest, most fascinating little woman in all Paris. [Pause.

GIL. Do you know, I have changed my mind about Carlsruhe. I think I should like to live at Carlsruhe all the year round. Can you not accept that post which the ministry offered you two months ago?

SAR. (*Smiling.*) I can scarcely accept what I refused. Another man is minister at Carlsruhe now, and I have work at home.

GIL. (L.) But I thought you would give it up and take the post at Carlsruhe if I preferred it.

SAR. (L. C.) I am afraid that is not the principle on which affairs of state are managed! But you need not reproach yourself; I assure you I am happier here than I should have been in a foreign post.

[*Gilberte looks at him strangely, then goes to a chair further off.*

GIL. Well, you make fun of all my good resolutions—that is plain.

SAR. (*Rising.*) On the contrary, I shall hold you to them.

GIL. Will you, now?

SAR. Yes, and reward you beforehand. (*Rise.*) What do you say to those chestnuts I refused you yesterday.

GIL. I will not have them!

[*Cross, R.*

SAR. What?

Enter BRIGARD, C.

BRIG. How do, Frou Frou?

SAR. M. Brigard!

BRIG. How are you, my dear fellow?

SAR. You come in the nick of time, Gilberte is a little out of sorts, I am afraid. But you will soon be able to set her to rights, I am sure.

BRIG. Out of sorts, Gilberte?

GIL. Good morning, papa!

[*Sits R.*

BRIG. Oh, it will not last. By the way, I want you to do something for me. Three days ago when you were skating it seems to me you wore a most fascinating Polish cap.

GIL. Well?

BRIG. Well, Madame de Lauveriennes spoke to me about it, and I thought that perhaps for your old father's sake— (*Gilberte crosses L., and rings.*) What, are you really going to—

GIL. I will tell Pauline to bring it. [*Brigard gets L.*

Enter PAULINE, R. D.

Gilberte goes up C., and speaks to Pauline, who exits, R.D.

BRIG. (*L. C., aside to Sartorys.*) Well, have you heard? They hissed her! Positively hissed her off the stage.

SAR. Hissed her? Who?

BRIG. Oh, you know! But there was a party against her in the house! I will swear to it. In fact, if you hear the subject mentioned, you can say that you *know* it was a party.

SAR. I will not fail to do so. [*Gilberte sits front.*

BRIG. Thank you.

SAR. (*Cross to L. C.*) Well, what about those ponies?

GIL. I won't have them—how many times must I tell you the same thing?

SAR. For once in a way, then, I shall show that I possess a will of my own, and so, whether you want them or not, Mme. de Sartorys, have them you shall.

BRIG. (*Turning from glass.*) Have what? What's the matter?

SAR. My wife refuses to accept a present from me of two beautiful horses.

BRIG. Make the two four, and try her again.

SAR. (*Crosses to L. C., looking at watch.*) I am not going to have my Frou Frou become a reasonable woman.

[*Exit, L. 3 E.*]

BRIG. (*Crosses to R., strumming on piano.*) Refusing the pair was all a dodge, eh! child? I know my Frou Frou; she wants a team. Well, I bet you will have your way. A very good-natured fellow that husband of yours?

GIL. (*Aside.*) When I want to come back to him—to be his wife again—this is how he treats me!

BRIG. (*Strumming.*) A very good-natured fellow.

GIL. (*Aside.*) But of course, as Louise is here, what is the use of me. (*Brigard hums a bit of a tune.*) He treats me as if I were a mere child, without reason or feeling.

BRIG. Your piano is out of tune—a very pretty song.

GIL. (*Bursting into tears.*) Oh, what shall I do!

BRIG. (*Rising and coming to her.*) Why, Gilberte, Gilberte, my child! What is the matter?

GIL. Oh, dear! (*Cries.*) Don't mind me, papa!

BRIG. But what is it? Come, now; if it is anything serious, which I don't suppose it is, in whom can you confide better than in your father.

GIL. (*Impatiently.*) Ah!

BRIG. What do you mean by that? You must not say "Ah!" in that way. (*At left of couch.*) Do you think that because I am a frivolous old wretch, and can not reconcile myself to wearing grey hairs, that I could not behave like a father (*enter Pauline, R. D., with cap*) if I were put to it? Oh, come! but you know I am a father, after all, and as such—

PAU. Is this the cap, Madame?

GIL. What is it? Oh, yes, that is it. Here, papa!

[*Gives cap to Brigard.*]

BRIG. (*Taking it awkwardly.*) And I say, as a father, —oh, yes! that is it—thank you; and I say, in that capacity—

GIL. Well, what is the matter? Is that not what you wanted?

BRIG. Yes, but—

GIL. (*Smiling.*) But what?

BRIG. (*Decisively.*) But that is not all that I was thinking about just then. (*To Pauline.*) Have the goodness to send that to my brougham. (*Exit Pauline, c.*) The deuce take it all! I am not going to have it said that I could not play the part of father *once* in my life! (*Gilberte laughs.*) Now come here, little one, and tell me why you cried just now.

GIL. (*Crosses to L.*) Oh, one has one's bad days, you know; it was nothing else.

BRIG. (c.) Nothing else—positively?

GIL. No!

BRIG. I know, we all have our dull moments—even *I* sometimes! Not often, certainly! But seriously, there is one good thing about me, and that is my love for you (*kisses her.*) You know it, and you know that if ever you wanted a guide—(*Gilberte smiles*) well, well, there is nothing really amiss, eh? Only a little nervousness. I thought it was nothing worse. Kiss me, then, (*kisses her again*) and don't let us think of it any more. But, by the way, as I am in the paternal mood, I think I will just talk to you a bit about Louise.

GIL. Louise!

BRIG. Yes; M. de Villaroel comes here very often, does he not?

GIL. M. de Villaroel!

BRIG. Yes.

GIL. He does *come* rather often.

BRIG. Very often?

GIL. (*Smiling.*) Well, *very* often then.

BRIG. And *why* do you suppose he comes?

GIL. Oh—because, I suppose—he likes me.

BRIG. (*Laughing.*) Ah, Frou Frou, you little piece of vanity! Well, I must not scold you for it; I thought so myself! I never *can* cure myself of that! Whenever I hear that someone admires one of my daughters, I al-

ways say to myself, "it is Gilberte." But that is not being a good father, for after all I have two daughters, and this time it has not been to see you that M. de Villaroel has been here every day—it has been to see Louise.

GIL.. (*Joyfully.*) To see Louise?

BRIG. Yes, he loves her (*business,*) and he came last night to ask my consent to his proposal.

GIL. (*Sitting on his knee.*) Oh papa, papa. (*Kisses him.*) You cannot think how happy this makes me! There is no possible reason for refusing such a good match, is there? [*Sits by him.*]

BRIG. No, I do not see that there is. A deputy, rich, of good family, and a devilish nice fellow into the bargain!

GIL. No good reason at all. He is just the man for her. Have you told her of this offer?

BRIG. Not yet. I should have spoken to her now if she had been at home, though, indeed, I suppose she would only have answered as she always has done before—that she never intends to marry at all!

GIL. She must not answer that.

BRIG. No, of course she must not. (*Rise.*) But your sister is an odd woman! I cannot make her out. Shutting herself up like this, and with the strange determination to die an old maid. She used not to be so.

GIL. You are right—she used not.

BRIG. Sometimes I cannot help fancying that Louise must have had some love affair that we know nothing of—and an unrequited attachment, and that sort of thing.

GIL. Father.

BRIG. I really do think so!

GIL. Ah!

BRIG. (*Hastily looking at his watch and rising, L.*) You think it all over, and see if I am not right.

[*Goes to mirror, L.*]

GIL. (*Following him.*) But if it were so?

BRIG. Well, I could not speak to her on the subject; it would never do—her own father! But I should advise *you* to try and win her confidence. Women, sisters especially, can worm anything out of one another.

GIL. I?

BRIG. Yes: you get her to tell you this grand secret of hers.

GIL. I speak to her?

BRIG. And finish it up by convincing her how ridiculous it is to waste her whole life for a fancy, and that she had much better marry M. de Villaroel, who really is a delightful fellow.

GIL. (*Decisively.*) Oh, I will convince her of that!

BRIG. Will you, indeed, now? [*They come down.*]

GIL. I will.

BRIG. You will use every argument to induce her to accept this offer.

GIL. Every argument. And I *shall* induce her.

BRIG. You think so?

GIL. I hope so.

BRIG. Come, I like that tone! Why, I feel that the whole responsibility of the affair is off my shoulders. Now what are you laughing at? Oh, I *could* play the resolute father if I liked. There you go again! Well, well, never mind. I love to hear you laugh at *me*. It is only when you cry—as you did just now—that I am ashamed of myself. No, no, Gilberte, you *must* not be unhappy—you must not! Ah, I do not deceive myself; I know I have not been a good father! As long as you are merry, I do not feel as if I need upbraid myself. But if you are sad, I think somehow that it is my fault. Ah, Gilberte—my Frou Frou, my flower—don't ever be unhappy, if not for your sake, for mine. You love me, darling, don't you? Well, if you were unhappy, I think I should die of remorse. There, there—goodby, I must be off! Where is the cap? Of course I had it put into the carriage. Goodby. [*Exit, c.*]

GIL. This time she *shall* not refuse, she *dare* not. What if she should, though? No, it is impossible. If she *does*—ah, what horrible temptation arises before me! Who, who will protect me? Poor papa, he would if he knew how; but he does not, and my husband refuses. (*Throws herself in chair.*) Ah, but my boy, he still remains—he shall shield me. [*Rises and crosses R.*]

Enter FOOTMAN, C.

FOOTMAN. Madame!

GIL. What is it now?

FOOTMAN. M. de Valreas, Madame, asks if he can see you.

GIL. (*Aside.*) He—oh, I cannot (*looks at Footman.*) Show him in—and tell Pauline to dress George at once, and bring him to go out with me. [*Exit Footman, c.*]

Enter VALREAS, c.

GIL. (L. c.) Do you know why I received you? Because my footman looked at me suspiciously; I was not going to have the servants ask themselves why I closed my doors on you.

VAL. (R. c.) I have only a few words to say.

GIL. That is well, for I have only a few moments to give you. Why did you come? Why, after the letter I wrote you, did you dare to come again?

VAL. You told me in that letter to leave Paris.

GIL. Well?

VAL. Well, I will go—to-night—you know I told you that I would go.

GIL. I know you *told* me so; but how can I tell that you will do it?

VAL. You have no right to disbelieve me; I have always told you the truth.

GIL. Well, I *do* believe you then—you will leave Paris to-night, but you ought to have left without trying to see me.

VAL. I could not do that.

GIL. And why not?

VAL. (c.) You must not ask too much of me; think of what I was—and of what I am! Who would recognize in me the fellow whom everybody used to call a scatter-brain, fit only for pleasure and merriment. I should have laughed the man to scorn who had prophesied that I should one day suffer what I suffer now when I read your letter! At first I thought I would be strong, and sacrifice myself entirely by going away without seeing you again.

GIL. That is what you ought to have done. Why did you not?

VAL. I had not the courage! After the first I could think of *nothing* but that I was going to be separated

from you. I said to myself that if you had the right to demand such a sacrifice of me, I had at least the right to ask a few words of farewell from you. Words that should give me the strength and courage to do what you wish.

GIL. Well I—

Enter PAULINE, R.

PAU. Madame—

GIL. (*Cross, c. with a cry of joy.*) My boy, bring him to me, bring him at once!

PAU. But Madame—

GIL. (*To Valreas.*) I am going out with my boy— at once!

PAU. Master George is not here, Madame.

GIL. Not here?

PAU. No, Madame. Mdlle. Louise took him out with her.

GIL. Louise! (*c., Restraining herself.*) Oh of course if Mdlle. Louise took him with her it is right, Pauline, quite right. You may go! (*Exit Pauline, R. D.*) Not even my child, nothing to help me—nothing—nothing— nothing!

VAL. Gilberte!

[*Takes her hand.*]

GIL. Oh, you will go, won't you? Now, more than ever, you must go! You will; swear it to me!

VAL. I will go. I swear it.

GIL. Because I do not love you, I never *can* love you—you must know that. And you—love me.—That is why I want you to go—do you understand? If I were quite as bad, and light and frivolous as folks fancy, I should keep you beside me to see your devotion, even tho' I cannot love you. Many women would do so, but I—I cannot. Go I say, you must go. Go, and forget me, yes, forget me—but—but not too quickly.

VAL. (*Snatching her hands.*) Ah Gilberte! Gilberte?

GIL. (*Freeing herself.*) This evening remember—you leave this evening.

Enter SARTORYS, L. 3 E.

SAR. (C.) Oh, Paul, I did not know you were here.

GIL. (L.) M. de Valreas has come to bid us good-
by.

[*Gets around to L. C.*]

SAR. You are leaving Paris?

VAL. (R. C.) Yes, to-night.

SAR. To-night? But not for long I hope. Paris could not get on without you for long. It must be "au revoir."

VAL. Yes, au revoir. (*Goes up; Sartorys goes R.*) (*Bows to Gilberte,*) Madame.

GIL. Goodby, Monsieur. (*Exit Valreas, c.*) (*Aside.*) Now, I have done my duty, let others do theirs. [*At back of chair.*

SAR. (*Sitting, R.*) Well, dearest, has that merry father of yours succeeded in bringing back your good spirits?

GIL. (*Looking him in the face.*) Not exactly. Louise is to leave us.

SAR. (*Rising.*) What?

GIL. I say Louise is to leave us. M. de Villaroel has proposed for her, and I hope she will leave us to be married.

SAR. Impossible!

[*Rises.*

GIL. (*Pause.*) You seem to take the matter to heart?

SAR. I do. I have got so used to the idea that Louise would never leave us; but it is selfish of me; I acknowledge it, and am sorry for it. For, of course, if it is to be for her happiness, we must not grudge parting with her. Is it settled?

GIL. No; M. de Villaroel has only seen papa at present. I believe she likes him, and if she refuses him I think it will be because she fancies herself indispensable here.

SAR. She must not do that. Though, of course, she is most important to us. You must talk to her.

[*Goes to her.*

GIL. I speak to her? What have I to do with serious things (*cross, R.*) Frou Frou, you know! I am far too flighty, too childish even to understand them. If it were a new dress—no, no—you must speak to her; you can influence her, and *mind*, I shall expect you to do it.

SAR. (*Astonished.*) What?

Enter LOUISE, in Walking-dress, c.

LOU. (*Sitting and taking off her gloves, c.*) There, I've seen Mme. de Lussy and the governess. I like

the look of the girl. I have engaged her; she will come in a day or two. (*To Sartorys.*) Have you seen the agent?

SAR. (L.) I have. But I want to speak of something else to you now, Louise: something more important.

LOU. More important?

SAR. Yes, especially for yourself. [*Gets L.*]

LOU. For me?

SAR. Yes.

LOU. Whan can it be? [*Goes and sits L. C.*]

SAR. An offer of marriage.

LOU. What—again?

SAR. M. de Villaroel. (*Louise starts slightly.*) Ah, you do not say “what—again?” now.

LOU. No: such an offer can not be treated flippantly. M. de Villaroel is one of the most distinguished men of our time—I know that. Shall I confess it, I am proud to be sought by one of his talents and position—of his goodness, too! I am proud, but more than that, I am glad.

GIL. (*Aside.*) Ah! Thank heaven!

LOU. Because if I refuse such a man as he—good, rich, and clever—I hope you will all believe, at last, that I do not intend to marry at all, and make up your minds to leave off trying to persuade me!

SAR. You refuse? [*Stands, L.*]

LOU. Most certainly.

SAR. But you must not.

LOU. (*Rises; archly.*) Remember, two months ago I did not want to come and live here—you pressed me to come! So much the worse for you now, if you do not want me any longer; for you will certainly have to keep me.

SAR. Of course—only—

LOU. (*Rising.*) Only what? Are you dissatisfied with me? Have I fulfilled my task ill? Unless you prove to me that I am incapable of doing the “tiresome things” that I came here to do—unless you tell me that I am useless to you both—I shall stay.

SAR. You know well enough, dear Louise, that if we had only consulted our *own* happiness, we should never

have broached the subject to you; but we are bound to consult yours as well.

LOU. Mine?

SAR. Yes, Louise, yours.

LOU. Ah, if you want to consider my happiness, let me live on here! I shall never be so happy anywhere else. No duties will please me as well as those that I have undertaken for your sakes. To order your household, to chose a governess for Georgie—ah, if you knew how I worship that child!—these are the things that I like to do. I have always fancied that woman has two spheres—one all youth, and brightness, and pleasure—(*points to Gilberte*) that is hers; the other made up of many duties and cares, and much work—that is mine! It is a little dull sometimes, but as Gilberte told you two months ago, I like it. (*Back of chair, L.*) As a favour, you asked me then to take it upon myself—as a favour, I ask you to leave it to me! And indeed, I think if you bade me go now, I should refuse.

[*Sits L. C.*

SAR. (*To Gilberte.*) There, you see!

[*Cross behind to Gilberte.*

GIL. Yes, I see.

SAR. You know her as well as I do. You must know that it is quite useless to insist!

LOU. Perfectly useless.

SAR. However, you can try.

GIL. Yes, I will try.

[*Go up c.*

SAR. (*Goes to Louise.*) I have not changed my mind as to what you *ought* to do, dear Louise, for I think that, for your ultimate happiness, you should agree to this marriage. But you make me so happy in refusing, that, upon my word, I have not the courage to persuade you further. At least, not now!

LOU. Neither now nor at any other future time I hope.

SAR. (*Taking her hand.*) We must see. [*Rises.*

LOU. What would be the use? That which I answer to-day I shall always answer.

[*Sartorys presses her hand gratefully. Exit Sartorys, L. 3 E. Louise moves up towards door c.*

GIL. (*Moving up so as to meet her sister.*) Where are you going?

LOU. To fetch a book for George.

GIL. George can wait. So you are determined not to listen to M. de Villaroel's suit.

LOU. Quite determined.

GIL. Ah, because you want to stay here to watch over our happiness—his and mine.

LOU. Gilberte!

GIL. I suppose it is highly meritorious of you. I ought to thank you, I would—if you had divided your attentions equally!

LOU. Good heavens!

GIL. You have been very careful of my husband, very careful of my child, but as for *me*, you have neglected *me* a little; don't you think so? You did wrong, very wrong, for if you had looked a little closer, you might have seen that of *all* the dangers threatening this house, which you have taken under your protection, the gravest are of *my* making.

LOU. I do not understand you!

GIL. An hour ago M. de Valreas was here—*here* close to me, swearing that he loved me! I said I did not love him.

LOU. That was right!

GIL. But I lied, Louise! I *do* love him!

LOU. It is not true.

GIL. It is what you did not see, but what you ought to have seen if you had fitly fulfilled the duty that you so heroically took upon yourself.

LOU. What demon possesses you?

GIL. But perhaps the fond attention that you lavished on the one side, prevented you from looking carefully enough on the other.

LOU. Collect yourself. What you said just now is not true! You do not love M. de Valreas.

GIL. Why should I not? When you came here two months ago, did you seek to wean me from frivolity and from the temptation of a love such as this? No, your thoughts were elsewhere, and in those two months what was at first only a jest, has become a danger, from which—seeing that *you* were not dreaming of saving me—I have sought to save myself. I turned to my husband, to my child—it was the best thing to do, was it not?

I was tired of frivolity; I wanted love! But my own are mine no longer; between me and my child *you*—you, always *you*. [Crosses to L.

LOU. I will go, Gilberte; I will go. [Crosses R.

GIL. You have taken my child from me (*up c.*) and as for my husband—

LOU. (R. C.) Your husband—

GIL. Do you know that I have watched you together of late? An evening, four years ago, has come back to me as if it were yesterday; and I have put the suspicions I had then beside those I have now, until—

LOU. (*Interrupting.*) Suspicions?

GIL. Ah, don't make me say what is in my mind.

[Goes L. in front of T.

LOU. (C.) Why not? Why should you not speak with your lips what is poisoning your heart? Say it out—when your husband proposed to you—I loved him!

GIL. Ah! at last you acknowledge it! [Goes L.

LOU. Yes; I loved him!

GIL. I knew it!

[Sits L.

LOU. (C.) But *he*—loved *you*. And he was a noble and good man, and I thought he would make you a good husband—I thought that your safety lay in marriage with him! That was why I took your hand and placed it in his myself, even tho' I loved him. And for fear you should not consent, I pretended to be merry; I said he was nothing to me: yet even as I said it, yes—at the very moment that I was sacrificing myself for you both—I—*I loved him!*

GIL. (L.) And by the morrow, I suppose, your love had vanished!

LOU. No, not by the morrow! I suffered long—yes, very long—yes, very long! Indeed, I almost think that my sacrifice and the struggles I have made to stifle my love, deserve a better reward than this at your hands. [Go R.

GIL. Sacrifice! I suppose it was sacrifice again when you came and lived here in my house beside the man whom you loved, though he was my husband!

[Up around to L. by fire-place.

LOU. You forget, Gilberte, (C.) you forget every-

thing. Do you not recollect how often and often you begged me to come, and how I refused over and over again, till you both grew angry with me?

GIL. You consented in the end. [*Up and down, L.*]

LOU. Because I had vanquished my love.

GIL. Or because the time was better chosen.

LOU. Gilberte, you are mad!

GIL. Oh, no, I am not!

LOU. (c.) Then what evil spirit brings such thoughts into your heart? Come, recall the facts to your memory! Did I want to come? Even this last time, when I finally consented, did I not fight against it, and was it not you who wished it?

GIL. Ah, but how well you knew how to make me wish what you wished. How clever you have been, my noble, unselfish sister—and what a child I am beside you! (*Sits, c.*) You did not hope to win him away from me in the old days when he was infatuated. You gave me to him then. You thought he should find out for himself how much better a woman like yourself could serve him than a frivolous being such as I. You have been wise. You sacrificed yourself for me at the first, but you have kept yourself free; that in one instant you might take back all that you boasted of having given me. You have chosen your time well. You have your reward, for you hold him now against me!

LOU. I will go—I will go at once! [*Crosses to R.*]

GIL. What! sacrifice yourself again? Oh, there is no need of that now! *You shall not go!* [*Goes up.*]

LOU. What?

GIL. Heaven is my witness that I was honest in fighting against temptation; I can do no more. I have been petted, spoiled and worshiped all my life. I should be a fool to spurn the only one who *still* worships me, when you and my husband—

LOU. (L.) Hush, Gilberte, what are you going to do?

[*Seizes her hand.*]

GIL. You have conquered. I yield you my place!

LOU. Where are you going?

GIL. You ask too much!

[*Goes up, R. C.*]

LOU. Gilberte!

GL. Husband—child—you have stolen them both!
keep them now! [Exit, C. D.]

Lou. (*Knocking at door.*) Gilberte! Gilberte!

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE FIRST.—*Six weeks afterwards. A Room in an old Venetian Palace; view of Venice from Window, c., Doors L. U. E. A Table set for Breakfast, a Chair on each side. Arm Chair and Table. Couch. Zanetto discovered on Couch.*

Enter PAULINE.

PAU. Quick, Zanetto, quick! You must go to M. de Valreas' lodgings and tell him that Madame waits breakfast for him.

ZAN. And pray what makes you think, Mdlle. Pauline, that Zanetto's business is to run messages?

PAU. (*Laughing.*) What is Zanetto's business, I wonder?

ZAN. Zanetto's business is gracefully to wear the national costume of Venice, and gracefully to sing the old airs of his country. But, then, to please you, I will go to Signor Comte.

PAU. Especially as he will tip you well when you get there.

ZAN. And what if he does? luckless Venice! (*Rises and looks around.*) Ah, how flattered the Barberini would be if they could only come back from their graves and see the splendour with which the rich French Signora has revived the ancient glory of their poor old palace! Only—

PAU. Only what?

ZAN. Very grand ways, *la signora*, but not always very punctual in paying for them. Buys a great deal, but lets the bills wait. That does well enough in Paris, where shopmen are rich; it does not suit the penniless

Venetians. For instance, there's that unhappy man, Matteo Stromboli.

PAU. Did he tell you to ask for his money?

ZAN. Poor wretch—here is his account.

PAU. (*Takes it.*) Ah!

ZAN. Twelve hundred francs. A mere nothing for the Signora, but for Matteo—a fortune.

PAU. Well, you can go.

ZAN. (*Leisurely.*) I'm going—I'm going.

PAU. Not very fast, I think.

ZAN. If I don't hurry too much, I may meet the Comte on the steps of the Palace and—I know him—he'll pay me as well for half as for a whole journey.

[*Exit R.*

PAU. The Venetians are a very charming people, but they are rather a nuisance about their bills. Twelve hundred francs a mere nothing—yes, but twelve hundred francs here, and three thousand francs there, and then seventeen hundred, and then two thousand—it mounts up.

Enter GILBERTE, L.

[*Pauline hides bill.*

GIL. Has he not come? Have you sent my message?

PAU. Yes Madame—but Zanetto has only just gone. (*Looks at bill—aside.*) I suppose I must tell her.

GIL. Pauline!

PAU. Yes, Madame.

GIL. You are a good girl, Pauline. I want to thank you for having followed me out here as you did. It was very good of you.

PAU. I have never served any one but you, Madame. I could not bear to leave you! So, as soon as I knew where you were I came.

GIL. I am grateful to you, believe me! But what are you hiding? You have a paper in your hand. What is it? Give it me!

PAU. It is a bill, Madame.

GIL. A bill?

PAU. Yes; I can not bear to speak of such things to you; but the people here begin to press for their money.

GIL. (*Aside, looking at the bill.*) I never thought of that!

PAU. And—there are others, Madame, amounting altogether to about ten thousand francs.

GIL. Where are they?

PAU. I have them all.

GIL. Give them to me. (*Takes bills.*) Here am I, in debt! I did not remember my debts when I sent back that money to the lawyer. Well, I must ask papa! Don't be afraid, Pauline, we shall pay somehow.

Enter ZANETTO with papers, which he places on table; a letter, which he hands to GILBERTE.

GIL. Ah, it is from the doctor.

[*Reads it eagerly, then sees Pauline waiting.*

PAU. Forgive me, Madame, I heard you say that the letter was from the doctor!

GIL. You want to know what news there is?

PAU. Yes, Madame! Master Georgie—

GIL. He is well! It is good news—good news!

PAU. Good news?

GIL. Yes, George is well, and his father, who has been dangerously ill for some weeks, is now better. That is what you wanted to know, is it not, Pauline? You had a right to ask it.

PAU. Oh, Madame, Madame!

GIL. Thank you, Pauline—thank you! (*Exit Pauline, L.; a pause.*) One short hour's anger, and this is what I have come to. Well, it is no use thinking of it now.

Enter VALREAS.

VAL. Gilberte!

GIL. Ah!

Enter ZANETTO, with a servant and tray.

ZAN. Excellencie, you are served.

GIL. Thank you, that will do. (*Exit Zanetto.*) Come to breakfast.

VAL. I am a little late.

GIL. (*Going to table.*) Oh, it does not signify.

[*They sit.*

VAL. Ah, but it does; and I should not have been late had it not been for a very particular reason.

GIL. (*Frightened.*) What reason?

VAL. My mother is here; she came last week. Of course you had no means of knowing.

GIL. I did know it.

VAL. You did? How?

GIL. Four days ago you came a little late, like to-day. It was the first time you had ever kept me waiting, and you seemed pre-occupied. So, when you left me—

VAL. Well?

GIL. Well, in Venice it is quite the thing for a young woman in a gondola to follow a young man in another gondola, is it not? That's how I came to know your mother is at Venice.

VAL. You knew it, and you never told me?

GIL. I was afraid.

VAL. Afraid?

GIL. Yes, but you smile at me now, and I feel brave again.

VAL. What were you afraid of?

GIL. She hates me, does she not?

VAL. My mother loves me so much that she could not hate anyone who—

GIL. Well, say the word; anyone who loves you.

VAL. Anyone who loves me.

GIL. But she would separate us if she could.

VAL. My mother is going to spend part of the winter in Rome—she hoped I would accompany her.

GIL. What did you say.

VAL. Can you doubt it; she leaves Venice to-morrow—she will leave alone.

GIL. Really?

VAL. Of course.

GIL. Ah, but not alone—Monsieur and Madame de Cambri go with her.

VAL. What! you knew they were here, too?

GIL. (*Sadly.*) Yes, I knew. And let me confess it—I had almost hoped that the Baroness would have come.

VAL. Gilberte!

GIL. But what does it matter, after all, while I have you! You are everything to me now: I must not for-

get that. So I will be content as long as you do not forget it.

VAL. Why say such things? You know I shall never forget!

GIL. No, no; I know.

Enter ZANETTO, with coffee and tray, c.

ZAN. Coffee for your excellencies.

VAL. That's right, Zanetto; and give us the newspapers.

ZAN. La Figaro? [*Hands it and exit.*]

VAL. (*Reading.*) Oh, a first night at the Palais Royal. The play to begin at half past eight.

GIL. We shall be late!

VAL. Yes, besides the paper is three days old.

GIL. Tell us the news of three days ago.

VAL. The Suez Canal—but I don't suppose you care for that?

GIL. No; I don't care for that.

VAL. The wet spoilt the spring races. Funny anecdote in La Vie Parisienne.

GIL. (*Reading over his shoulder.*) And at the theatres: "The Queen," "The Troubled Home."

VAL. "The First Happy Day." (*Lets it fall.*) Well, Gilberte?

GIL. How strange, that as I read the news—

VAL. I know what you mean.

GIL. You do not regret?

VAL. I?

GIL. Say you do not.

VAL. Nonsense.

GIL. You do love me?

VAL. Yes, I love you.

Enter PAULINE.

PAU. Oh, Madame!

GIL. What is it?

PAU. M. and Mme. de Cambri are here.

GIL. (*Joyfully.*) Ah!

Enter BARON and BARONESS.

MME. DE C. My dear child. [*The two women kiss.*]

GIL. How good of you to have come.

MME. DE C. If M. de Cambri had not brought me, I should have run away and come by myself.

[*They sit on sofa.*]

VAL. (*Aside to the Baron in front.*) Thank you.

BARON. Don't thank me. I have come because that which I undertook to tell you had to be said at once.

VAL. What do you mean?

BARON. Sartorys arrived this morning.

VAL. Sartorys! Ah, now I see why you allowed Mme. de Cambri to come—that if anything should happen, Gilberte should have some one near her.

BARON. Yes, that was my reason.

VAL. Sartorys!

BARON. Did you not expect it?

VAL. There are some things we are sure will come to pass, although we never think of them—Death for instance. (*Goes toward the women.*) How much you must have to say to one another.

MME. DE C. I should think so.

VAL. If you like, we will leave you for a little to have your chat quietly.

GIL. Are you going to your mother?

VAL. Yes.

GIL. But you will return.

VAL. I think so; M. de Cambri will be returning to fetch his wife, and I will come with him.

GIL. Then I shall see you again soon.

VAL. Yes. (*To Mme. de Cambri.*) Madame! (*Aside to Baron.*) What if the Baroness should tell her?

BARON. She does not know that Sartorys is in Venice.

VAL. (*Returning to Gilberte, sadly.*) Goodbye.

GIL. Au revoir.

VAL. Au revoir. [*Exeunt Valreas and Baron.*]

[*Gilberte places arm-chair for Mme.*]

GIL. Sit there—and now tell me about everything that has happened at home.

MME. DE C. At home?

GIL. My boy?

MME. DE C. He is well. I saw him—

GIL. Oh, you saw him.

MME. DE C. Yes, a week ago—the very day before I left—with his governess. I kissed him—once for myself and many, many times for you. [*Kisses her.*]

GIL. Thank you. And Louise?

MME. DE C. She is with her father, you know.

GIL. I know.

MME. DE C. As soon as M. de Sartorys—(*Recollecting herself.*) As soon as it was ascertained that all danger was over Louise and M. Brigard left Paris and returned to the Charmerettes!

GIL. To the Charmerettes.

MME. DE C. Yes. [*Pause.*]

GIL. What do they say of me in Paris?

MME. DE C. Nothing.

GIL. Nothing?

MME. DE C. Besides, fortunately for you, your husband's lawyer talked quite openly about those two million francs—your marriage portion—which he sent here to you, and which you returned by the next post.

GIL. The money did not belong to me, it was my son's. I could not honestly have done otherwise.

MME. DE C. All the same, you refused two million francs and not every woman would have done it. It produced a wonderful effect on people. Those who had been severe at first pitied you, and the rest almost admired you. (*Gilberte looks at her.*) Courage is such a fine thing—and so rare.

GIL. Well, at all events people were not altogether hard on me.

MME. DE C. Not at all! And I dare say many a one secretly envied you, for you are happy.

GIL. Happy?

MME. DE C. Yes.

GIL. Of course I am happy. (*Terrified.*) Great heaven! what should I be if I were not?

MME. DE C. You have very pretty rooms here, and such a charming boy to wait on you! (*Looking from window.*) What is that in the distance?

GIL. The Bridge of Sighs.

MME. DE C. Ah, the Bridge of Sighs! That is very nice. The severest of your judges would have to allow that you have at least avoided being ridiculous: as Mme.

de Rions was, for instance! I went to see the room where that catastrophe took place, you know. It was a wretched back drawing-room in a lodging house—and *such* paper on the walls! Fancy that unhappy woman, in the midst of two or three hundred Poniatowski, leaping into the water! It was heart-rending; whereas here—

GIL. Hush, now; hush, dear.

MME. DE C. Forgive me! But really, you know, my dear, I can not pity you much! He loves you—oh, you need not tell me! I saw him here, just now, when he bade you goodbye.

GIL. Yes, he loves me.

MME. DE C. And who would ever have thought he *could* love like that?

GIL. Oh, why did I not marry him? Just now, when you spoke of the home of my girlhood, I asked myself why I did not? Do you recollect that day five years ago?

MME. DE C. Yes, I recollect.

GIL. He proposed for me, too—but, of course, as it was Paul de Valreas no one ever took the trouble to answer him! And yet, if I had married *him*, I should not have been here.

MME. DE C. I don't know about that.

GIL. What did you say?

MME. DE C. I? Nothing.

GIL. Ah, yes, but I heard you.

Enter PAULINE hurriedly.

PAU. Madame! Madame!

GIL. Well, Pauline! Heavens! what is the matter?
[*Pauline whispers.*]

GIL. Ah!

PAU. He is waiting.

GIL. (*To Mme. de Cambri.*) Quick; come, please.

MME. DE C. What has happened, my dear?

GIL. (*Showing door, R.*) In there, I beg you, quick; and don't come out till I call you!

MME. DE C. Gilberte, my dear Gilberte!

GIL. But don't leave the house. I shall need you;

I feel it. Promise me to stay in the house—don't forsake me.

MME DE C. No, no; of course, I will stay.

GIL. (*Opening door.*) Thank you;—in there! (*Exit Baroness.*) Now!

[*Pauline goes to R. C.*

Enter SARTORYS, pale and changed. At a sign from GILBERTE, exit PAULINE.

GIL. You!

SAR. Yes, I.

GIL. I knew you had been very ill; but this morning I was thankful to learn you were better.

SAR. I have been at the point of death; had it not been so, I should have come before. I have something to settle with you.

GIL. To settle?

SAR. Yes, merely business. (*He totters; Gilberte moves towards him; he waves her off.*) Nothing; I beg your pardon. I am weak still; my throat is parched—I can scarcely speak—some water.

GIL. Water!

[*She seizes one of the two glasses on the table; he perceives the two places, and pushes away the proffered glass; Gilberte shrinks back, and replaces the glass.*

GIL. My God!

SAR. I have come about your fortune.

GIL. My fortune?

SAR. Yes, your dowry; the money that you returned. You must take it; I will not have you exposed to any privations.

GIL. I have said I will not.

SAR. Yes, yes, I know; but you must.

GIL. No, I tell you, I will not take it.

SAR. You force me to give you another reason. (*Gilberte looks at him terrified.*) I do not choose that my son should touch one penny of this money—do you hear? Not one penny.

GIL. Ah!

SAR. (*Stepping forward.*) And as it was not fitting that any one but I should tell you this, I have come my-

self. (*Places packet on table.*) And I leave this with you. [*Moves towards door.*]

GIL. You are going?

SAR. Yes, since all is now ended between us.

GIL. You are going to fight?

SAR. Of course. Would to heaven I had been strong enough to do so ere this! But you must have known that it was only my illness that kept me.

GIL. Fight—because of me! Two men try to kill one another because of me—of me—Frou Frou! It's not possible! Think of it. Frou Frou, who never thought seriously of anything but dress and pleasure. All my life was there. I was only made for that—only for that. Ah, who has thrown me into the midst of these dreadful things that are so terrible for me to understand? (*Sartorys moves towards door.*) You shall not fight—a man like you fight because of a woman like me! It can not be! Listen—let me tell you. You have always thought a great deal too much of me. Yes, you have idolized me. I always knew it, but I liked it, and I would n't undeceive you. I was wrong, but now I do undeceive you, because I won't have you kill a man for my sake. Oh, no, I won't have it—I won't have it! Don't think that I forget any part of my fault. Heaven forgive me, I remember all that I have done. I might say that if it had not been for that horrible scene with Louise— No, no; I know that I was wrong. I am humble. I ask for forgiveness. Though indeed, indeed, if I had never been so angry with Louise I should not have committed this sin. But I don't want to excuse myself. I know you must have your revenge, but not this way. I won't allow you to have a duel. I have said—I forbid it. Do you hear, I forbid it! There are other means of satisfying your honour.

SAR. My honour!

GIL. The world's opinion too! Why you know that whatever you do the world will never doubt your courage.

SAR. Ah, you are very much mistaken if you fancy that I consider my honour, or that I give one single thought to what the world may say, either of your sin or

of my revenge. I do not come as an outraged husband to kill my wife's seducer. I come as the man who loved you, to try and kill the man whom you now love. That is the plain truth, and I have nothing further to say.

[*Moves towards door.*

GIL. (*Throwing herself before him.*) No, no, you shan't go—I won't let you go out! I, I only, am guilty. Crush me, but me alone.

[*Clings to him.*

SAR. Leave me!

[*Tries to throw her off.*

GIL. What revenge do you want? Do you wish me to disappear? Ah, I don't mean death; I should not have the courage for that—but there are convents! Why there is one close here. I have often looked at the door as I went by—I can go and knock at it now—you shall take me yourself! The gates will close upon, and never, never, again will you hear of the woman who has offended you!

SAR. (*Still trying to free himself.*) Come, I have said.

GIL. Is *that* not yet enough? If it is not enough seek out some other punishment for me yourself—I will accept anything—everything. Yes, do you hear? Everything, but don't force me to live with the awful thought forever on my mind—that a man has died for my sake!

SAR. All this is useless.

GIL. For mercy's sake—for pity's sake.

SAR. I tell you no!

GIL. Henri!

SAR. Leave, go!

GIL. (*Exhausted and beside herself.*) Don't go—I will love you.

SAR. Ah!

[*She has fainted still holding his hand. He drags her towards sofa, throws her on it and at last unloosens her hold. He looks at her a moment—sees the Baroness who appears at door, L;—he points to Gilberte.*

[*Exit Sartorys.*

MME. DE C. Gilberte! Gilberte!

GIL. (*Opening her eyes.*) Where is he?

MME. DE C. Gone!

GIL. Gone?

[*Tries to rise.*

MME. DE C. Try to be calm.

GIL. (*Rising.*) He is gone to fight. (*Baroness starts.*) He told me so.

MME. DE C. How dreadful.

GIL. But I will follow him—I will prevent it.

MME. DE C. My dear, how can you follow? You don't know where they are.

GIL. I will find out.

MME. DE C. And even if you were to find out, what could you do? No, stay here, I understand now; M. de Cambri knew everything and he wished me to be with you. He did well.

GIL. I implore you, let me go.

MME. DE C. No, I will not allow you to leave this house.

[*Baroness forces her to sit down.*]

GIL. What is there that we can do, then?

MME. DE C. Nothing, but wait; M. de Cambri will come back presently.

GIL. Wait?

MME. DE C. Yes.

GIL. Ah, wait! wait!

MME. DE C. (*After a pause.*) Its only a duel after all; why, what heaps of duels we've seen in our days, and never one with a serious ending.

GIL. Yes, but somehow this one is different. Ah!
[*Struck with a thought.*]

MME. What is it?

GIL. (*Walking wildly about.*) M. de Valreas won't defend himself, I know; I am sure of it. Why didn't I think of saying that just now? If I had used that as an argument, if I had only said he would 'nt defend himself there would have been no duel.

[*She finds a chair in her way and drags it mechanically after her.*]

MME. DE C. Gilberte!

[*Gilberte lets herself fall on the chair; Mme. de Cambri kneels at her feet, kissing her gently.*]

GIL. Oh, God! to be here powerless—useless—waiting while—Ah, what is worse than waiting! And I can do nothing else! (*Long pause.*) Three months ago—scarcely so much—do you remember? One night

we went to the play, you and I and La Comtesse, Ismael and Mme. de Lauveriens. It was in a little theatre, I forget where, and we sat all together in a row in the front of the box, and everybody was looking at us. All of a sudden, between the acts, I began to clap my hands, without any reason, and to laugh and cry out: "Oh, how I am enjoying myself! How happy I am!" Don't you remember?

MME. DE C. Yes; I remember.

GIL. M. de Cambri does not return. Perhaps they have prevented them from fighting. (*Pause.*) Ah, listen!

MME. DE C. I don't hear anything.

GIL. Yes, yes, some one is coming. (*Rises quickly.*) I heard steps. Ah, heaven, I can not bear it!

Enter BARON, very pale.

GIL. I dare not ask—my husband?

BARON. He is safe.

GIL. And— (*Silence.*) Is he dead?

BARON. No, not dead—wounded, but—

GIL. But—

BARON. Dangerously wounded.

GIL. Good! I will go to him at once!

BARON. (*Stopping her.*) You can not go to him!

GIL. Why not? Oh, if you think that any one, or anything, shall prevent me—

BARON. (*Holding her back.*) His mother is with him.

GIL. His mother?

BARON. Yes.

GIL. Oh, then, you are right. If his mother is with him, I must not—no, you are right. There is no room for me. (*Totters.*)

*[Madame de Cambri pulls forward a chair.
Gilberte falls on it.*

GIL. You are right—you are quite right.

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

SCENE FIRST.—*Same as Act III, but an air of neglect over all; evening; a lighted Lamp on Table.*

GOVERNESS *discovered reading to* GEORGIE.

Gov. (*Reading.*) "The Prince had reached the garden door. This obstacle would have put an end to all further search, for the door was enchanted, and no skill in the world could have opened it, but that the Prince possessed the magic ring, given him by the wizard Merlin. So, when he knocked against the door the talisman touched it, and it flew open and the Prince entered the garden and searched far and wide to try and find the Princess. He searched for two years in every part of the world, and at last he found his dear Princess, and brought her safe back again to his own home."

GEO. Why did the Prince want so much to find the Princess?

Gov. Because he loved her.

GEO. And he did find her at last?

Gov. Yes, after two years.

GEO. Listen: I want to tell you something, but it is a secret.

Gov. Well?

GEO. Will you come with me? We will go all over the world and look for my dear mamma, and bring her back to her own home. [*Governess kisses Georgie.*]

Enter FOOTMAN.

FOOTMAN. Mademoiselle!

Gov. What is it?

FOOTMAN. M. Brigard is here. He would like to see Master George.

Gov. Ah! I wonder if I ought to allow it.

Enter BRIGARD.

GEO. (*Running to him.*) Why, it's grandpapa!

[*Brigard takes him on knee and sits on couch. Governess stands by table. Exit Footman.*]

BRIG. (*Kissing the child.*) How tall you have grown, Georgie; quite a man.

GEO. Yes, I have 'nt seen you for a long time.

BRIG. No, not for six months.

GEO. Where have you been all this time, and what have you done with my mamma?

BRIG. (*Turning aside.*) Ah!

Enter SARTORYS.

SAR. M. Brigard! I did not know you were here! (*Child runs to him.*) Take Georgie away, Miss Simpson.

GOV. Have I done wrong?

SAR. I found no fault with you. Take George away. (*Exit George and Governess.*) Have you been long in Paris?

BRIG. Only two days.

SAR. Are you here alone?

BRIG. No, Louise is with me, and—

SAR. And (*with effort*) Gilberte?

BRIG. Yes.

SAR. In Paris—so near me!

BRIG. We shall only be here a day or two! We are going south. The Paris physicians are all agreed that we must go south without delay.

SAR. The physicians?

BRIG. Yes, we came up from les Charmerettes to consult them. Gilberte is very ill—that must be my excuse for being here. I thought that if she could only see her boy it would do her more good than all the doctors.

SAR. Is she seriously ill?

BRIG. Yes.

SAR. But not in any danger.

BRIG. We *hope* not.

SAR. You *hope* not.

BRIG. I was certainly more alarmed about her state six months ago—on that dreadful day.

SAR. Go on.

BRIG. Well, I had followed you to Venice, when I heard you had gone, hoping to prevent harm. I arrived a few hours after you had left. For three days

Gilberte's life was despaired of. Madame de Cambri and I nursed her as well as we could, but every moment it seemed to us as though she must die. Then Louise came. At first Gilberte did not know her, but after a while, when Louise had held her long in her arms, consciousness seemed to return. She wept, and after that she was better.

SAR. And she recovered?

BRIG. She got well enough, some time after, to return to les Charmerettes.

SAR. And there she revived.

BRIG. Yes, at first. At least she got about—in fact she wore herself out visiting the sick and sorrowful in the village. But it was not the Gilberte of old. Her cheeks were wan and her eyes sunk, and she would never wear anything but a black dress—she who used to be so pretty.

SAR. So pretty!

BRIG. And at last, after she had sat up for nights with an old woman whom she had nursed back to life, her own turn came! When she wanted to rise again she was too weak—the doctors came, and the country ones sent us to the town ones, and the town ones are sending us south. God grant it may be in time.

Enter FOOTMAN, C.

FOOTMAN. Monsieur, Mdlle. Louise is here.

SAR. Louise.

BRIG. Merciful Heavens! If Louise has come—

SAR. Well?

BRIG. She must be dying.

SAR. No, no.

Enter LOUISE; she whispers to BRIGARD, who hastily exits.

LOU. The child!

SAR. Louise!

LOU. You *can not* refuse to let her see her child before she dies.

SAR. Before—

LOU. Yes—before she dies!

SAR. Oh God!

LOU. Answer me!

SAR. I will send for him. (*Steps towards bell.*) You shall take him with you.

LOU. Take him with me?

SAR. Yes; is that not what you asked of me?

LOU. It is what I *asked*. I hope you would have *granted* more.

SAR. What?

LOU. I hoped you would have taken him to her yourself—with one word of forgiveness.

SAR. Forgiveness!

LOU. She is dying!

SAR. If I could save her life with mine, I would do so, God knows how willingly. I can not forgive.

LOU. And yet it is through *you* that she dies.

SAR. Through me?

LOU. Yes; struck down by you. You have had your revenge; that is well. Can you not now forgive?

SAR. I should lie in saying that I did.

LOU. She has suffered bitterly.

SAR. Suffered! Look around you at the desolate hearth, the deserted child! Think of my honour defiled, my soul filled with hatred, vengeance and remorse for her sake, and ask yourself which of us two has suffered most?

LOU. She has done much to expiate her fault. The sick and destitute pray for her.

SAR. I do not ask the poor, whom she has blessed, to curse her for my sake; do not ask me to forgive her for *theirs*.

LOU. A greater sorrow than hers has forgiven her!

SAR. Of whom do you speak?

LOU. Of the mother whose son you killed!

SAR. *She* has forgiven?

LOU. Yes; before God she swore it to my poor dying sister. (*Pause.*) Think, but quickly; she waits, and her time is short.

SAR. If I were to say I forgive, I should lie! Do you want a lie of me?

Enter GILBERTE, supported by BRIGARD and PAULINE.

BRIG. She would come, Louise;—she would not wait.
[Gilberte makes a few steps alone, and then falls on her knees. Brigard starts forward to lift her up.]

GIL. No, papa, not you. No one can take me home but him.

SAR. *(Starts forward and lifts her in his arms.)* Ah, Gilberte! Gilberte!

GIL. Thank you. *(Sartorys places her on the couch. She looks around her.)* At home again? At home!

SAR. Yes, darling, at home—in your own home, never to leave it again.

GIL. *(Smiling.)* Never!

SAR. Gilberte, my own Gilberte.

GIL. You forgive me, don't you?

SAR. Yes, yes I *do*, and you *shall* not die.

GIL. Ah, I don't know. My boy! go and fetch my boy to me.

SAR. Yes, I will go.

GIL. Bring him to me quickly, as quickly as you can. *(Sartorys goes, L.)* Ah, don't cry, papa! poor papa!

Enter SARTORYS with child.

GEO. *(Springing to his mother.)* Mamma!

GIL. *(Kissing him wildly.)* Georgie, my lamb!

GEO. Dear mamma! so you have come back again?

GIL. Yes, but not for long, I think, my darling. I must kiss you again, *(kisses him,)* and now again, *(kisses him several times.)* Now, Louise, come here. Louise! *(Puts child in her arms.)* He is yours, I give him to you.

LOU. Gilberte!

GIL. Yes, I leave him to you *(points to Sartorys)* and him too. Take them both! Once before, in this very room, I said they were yours; I said it in anger, then, now I say it from my heart. Forgive me, everybody.

LOU. Ah!

GIL. Come close to me, both of you, and promise me it shall be so, *(points to George,)* because of him, it must be so, for his sake.

SAR. You shall not die! I can not bear it!

GIL. Not die? (*Looking around her.*) And yet, now, somehow I think it would be a pity not to die.

BRIG. My darling!

GIL. Don't be too sorry for me, papa! I am so happy! Why if I had what I deserved, I should be dying now alone, among strangers, unforgiven. But I am here, amongst you all, peaceful and happy!

SAR. Unforgiven? It is I who need forgiveness—I who never guessed—

GIL. You need forgiveness? What for? For having loved me too much? That has been *my* misfortune. Every one has loved me too much!

LOU. Gilberte!

GIL. That is why I am dying! But that is why I am dying so gently! (*Sinking.*) Ah!

ALL. (*Thinking her dead.*) Gilberte!

GIL. (*Raising her head a little.*) Is this death? What a little thing it seems to me! Louise? Where are you Louise? Come close, I want to whisper something to you! When I am dead—ah, yes, when I am dead—you must make me pretty again—as pretty as I used to be. I won't wear a black dress—then! I had a white dress once, all covered with little rosebuds; you must find it and put it on me! You will see—I shall look as pretty as ever, and you will find Frou Frou again just as she used to be.

SAR. Ah, Frou Frou!

GIL. You see just the same as ever! My boy! You forgive—everybody. Frou Frou—poor Frou Frou.

CURTAIN.

END.

